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For the latest in community news, visit www.grafenwoehr.army.mil

IN SEARCH OF SAVINGS

Garrison calls for community action to save energy, cut costs

Story and graphic by
MARY MARKOS
Editor

We need you!

The U.S. Army Garrisons Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels and Garmisch are calling on the public for ways to save energy and cut costs.

USAG Grafenwoehr Commander Col. Chris Sorenson and Command Sgt. Major William Berrios, garrison command sergeant major, reports that while the garrison took every effort to proactively forecast community requirements, the budgetary system has not kept pace with the rapid growth of the population, infrastructure and services.

Compounding this is a \$2 million increase in utilities due to a longer and colder winter, bringing the total utility bill to over \$39 million.

In an effort to cut costs, the garrison enacted a computer shutdown policy this month.

Tenants are asked to comply with the recent policy directing all government computers to be shut down at the end of each day (with the exception of Wednesdays).

Officials estimate that this small change of habit will save more than one-half million dollars annually.

"The recent government computer shutdown policy has given us nearly \$400K in savings, but that is just not enough," Sorenson said.

The garrison is asking the public to take everyday steps, such as turning off lights when leaving a room and unplugging electronics when not in use, to help cut costs.

"Every dollar we can save thru common sense energy reduction measures, turning off lights, complying with computer shutoff policies, etc., will help save money ...," said Rich Beiter, USAG Grafenwoehr resource management director.

The garrison is also seeking the public's ideas to save on utilities, supplies and services. Individuals living in all areas of the garrison can submit suggestions through the garrison's Web site at www.grafenwoehr.army.mil, by clicking the "idea" button located at the top of the main page.

Sorenson anticipates possible curtailment of essential services, such as reducing the motor vehicle fleet used by tenant organizations, as well as custodial and grounds maintenance.

He believes that as a community, we can find savings that will offset a portion of the deficit, but it will require everyone's effort and understanding.

WE
NEED
YOU
TO
HELP US
SAVE MONEY



Officials break ground for Grafenwoehr guesthouse

USAG Grafenwoehr Press Release

After more than three years of design and planning, officials broke ground for the new Grafenwoehr Guesthouse March 20.

"Finally the long time of waiting is over", said Andrea Mueller, manager of the Tower Inn in U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr.

"We are very excited about eventually being able to provide enough space and comfort for the growing number of visitors to the Grafenwoehr community. With the enormous unit movements to the area and all the training exercises and conferences, our current facilities simply became too small", Mueller explained.

The Tower Inn Hotel, which currently consists

See GUESTHOUSE Page 25

ASSISTANCE

Chaplains offer absolute confidentiality

by KIM GILLESPIE
USAG Grafenwoehr PAO

According to Garrison Commander Col. Chris Sorenson, the U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr had five instances involving Soldiers with suicidal ideations in the twelve day span of March 5-17.

One of these cases ended tragically, something Sorenson is determined will not happen again.

"We are focused on recognizing the signs and intervening with others, but we must eliminate the stigma associated with seeking help for mental health issues," Sorenson said.

"Regardless of rank, we need to say it is OK to discuss mental health, and that OK will not disadvantage one's career, or one's position in an organization," he said.

For those individuals who are still hesitant about seeking medical attention, another option to consider is their Army chaplains.

According to Chaplain (Maj.) David Nielsen, chaplains are a great resource for help with dealing issues surrounding suicide or other stressful concerns.

Nielsen encourages those who are struggling with getting help to seek a chaplain's help because chaplains can be vital in developing healthy solutions to Soldiers'

struggles, especially in the area of suicide.

"Since September 2007, Army chaplains have provided 'absolute confidentiality' to those they counsel. Total confidential communication with a chaplain is the right of those who serve... This privilege belongs to the counselee, and in order for confidentiality to be broken, the counselee must give specific written permission," Nielsen said.

While the military in Europe does not have a suicide hotline, communities have on-call chaplains who will respond 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"Also, physicians and behavioral health workers are trained and prepared to support Soldiers with concerns or needs in this area. Military Police can also be contacted 24/7 with concerns and can help with getting resources for such emergencies," Nielsen said.

If a Soldier tells a chaplain he or she is considering suicide, chaplains use ACE, or Ask, Care, and Escort, the same suicide intervention technique taught during phase one of the suicide prevention stand-down.

While Nielsen said that if an individual has already stated a suicidal intention, the "ask" may focus on how serious the threat is, and more importantly, listening to what the person's issues are.

According to Nielsen, the second step, "care,"

See COMMUNITY Page 25

COMMANDER'S MESSAGE



Moral leadership, change in culture necessary for success

Our Army is asking all of us to rethink how we deal with moral issues that have plagued our Army family for generations: Suicide and Sexual Harassment and Assault

This is Moral Leadership and we must lead the way in tackling these issues.

Moral leadership is ensuring that we change our culture to remove the bias, such as the Army confronting segregation, and adopting a new way, of treating difficult topics.

From March 5th to 17th, our community had four cases that appear linked to suicide ideation and one horrible death that may be attributed to suicide.

It is painful to think that we may have missed the signs of depression or suicidal indicators of the Soldier who is no longer with us.

It is equally painful to think we may have avoided the issue as too

tough to discuss, or that we may have ostracized the victim due to an obsolete stigma associated with mental health.

Regardless of rank, we need to say it is OK to discuss mental health, and that OK means the conversation will not disadvantage one's career, or one's position in an organization.

The Department of Defense has already changed security clearance questionnaires to accept mental health treatment, and

top brass are telling us that it is OK to discuss.

We must echo their call and accept that mental health will not affect a report card, awards or placement.

Sexual assault undermines unit readiness. U.S. Army Europe Commander Gen. Carter F. Ham recently led a senior leader conference consisting of all USAREUR general officers,

colonels and their sergeants major to introduce the Sexual Harassment/ Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) program.

Like behavioral health, this is an issue many are uncomfortable discussing, but 'we are now morally obligated to discuss.'

The SHARP "I. A.M. STRONG" campaign engages all personnel in preventing sexual assaults before they occur.

We are shifting our focus from reaction to prevention. Sexual assault is a criminal act.

Part of being a Soldier and leader is having the personal courage to act - or intervene when your fellow

Soldiers are in danger.

Standing up for your fellow

Soldier is your duty and you are asked to "act" by doing what is right.

Prevention is also about reducing risks by being prepared, being alert and being assertive, whether it is a social or professional situation.

Removing the fear some victims may have of reporting sexual assaults must also be addressed.

Our first priority is for victims to be protected, treated

with dignity and respect and to receive the medical treatment, care and counseling that they deserve.

We will be educating Soldiers

about the reporting options, restricted and unrestricted, and will ensure that everyone understands DoD's Confidentiality policy.

This policy permits victims of sexual assault to report the crime to individuals who can ensure the victim receives medical care, treatment and counseling without notifying command or law enforcement officials. These individuals include the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC), Victim Advocates (VAs), healthcare providers and chaplains.

I hope our frank discussions about sexual assault and prevention will empower both victims and comrades to come forward and seek help or step up and offer help.

Like suicide prevention, we must change our behavior through strong moral leadership - together.

*Col. Chris Sorenson
Commander, U.S. Army
Garrison Grafenwoehr*



CSM CORNER



Stay safe by reviewing policies, show consideration for neighbors

In the coming weeks, the schools will release students for a well-deserved Spring Break.

As this is an exciting time for many of us who will choose to travel, it is also a time when we need to stay alert to our surroundings and take safety precautions at home and when traveling.

While on break and as the temperatures begin to rise, children will be playing outside more on bikes, scooters, and skateboards.

It is the parent's responsibility to ensure their child is wearing helmets and the appropriate clothes and shoes for the activity.

One serious injury that could have been avoided is one too many.

Trampolines

I would like to review the Garrison's policy on trampolines in government-owned and leased housing areas. While trampolines are permitted in these areas, I implore extreme caution be taken, with strict compliance to the following restrictions and guidelines:

■ Trampolines must be erected within a lockable fence or enclosure, so that unrestricted, unprompted use cannot occur. If the owners do not have such an area available

to them, the trampoline must be dismantled when not in use.

■ Safety pads must be installed to completely cover the springs, hooks, and frame. A safety net or trampoline enclosure must be installed around the trampoline to help prevent falls.

■ Only one person should be on a trampoline at a time.

■ No ladder may be used to assist children onto the trampoline as this encourages unsupervised access by small children.

Building and Area Coordinators are responsible for monitoring and maintaining compliance with the above guidelines.

Outdoors

This is also the time of year when we dust off the outdoor equipment and fire up the grills.

I would like to remind everyone that the use of barbecue grills is prohibited on balconies or within ten feet of Family Housing units.

While barbecues and bonfires are a nice way to visit with neighbors and friends, we must remain aware of the dangers of fire and take every measure to ensure our activities and those around us are safe.

As we enjoy the outdoors, we need to be aware of how we leave public areas and yards.

Policing the housing area and picking up after yourself, to include barbecue grills and outdoor furniture, is everyone's responsibility. If you take it out, put it away.

Show consideration to your neighbors by having pride in the appearance of your living community.

Cleaning up after yourself includes cleaning up after your pets.

Animals should only be allowed to defecate in designated areas and pet owners MUST remove and dispose of feces.

Pets must be controlled and leashed at all times while outside one's quarters, and pets cannot be left outside during the night.

It is your duty

On a very different and somber note, I would like to stress to every leader the importance of knowing your Soldiers and being available to if they need or ask for help.

Col. Sorenson and I are concerned and alarmed at the recent suicide ideations, and it is the responsibility of each of us to ensure another life is not lost.

As leaders, we need to be in touch with our Soldiers and their family members and they need to know that they can turn to us in a time

of crisis.

Discussing suicide and asking if someone is thinking of hurting themselves often makes people uncomfortable, so it is up to us to ensure such questions are asked.

Chaplains are one of our best resources encourage your Soldiers to speak to them if they need to.

Celebration

In closing and in celebration of the Year of the NCO, I would like to congratulate the

hundreds of Soldiers, both active duty and reserve, who graduated from the Warrior Leader Course and Basic Non-Commissioned Officer Course in the past week.

Their accomplishments exemplify the Warrior spirit and ethos and commitment to duty.

*Command Sgt. Maj.
William Berrios
CSM, U.S. Army
Garrison Grafenwoehr*



THIS SPACE IS RESERVED FOR YOU!

Write a letter to the editor today, and tell us about issues that matter to you.

Call 475-7113 for more information.

Bavarian News

Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels, Ansbach, Schweinfurt, and Garmisch

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Financial experts, regulators help inform Army audiences

by **MARK HEETER**
Schweinfurt CI Chief

With stock markets and indices around the world flailing wildly from day to day, there might be no better time than the present to talk money with the experts.

Officials with the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, the largest private regulator of the financial industry in the United States, visited the U.S. Army Garrison Schweinfurt March 10, their second stop at Army installations that week.

“FINRA is a financial industry regulatory authority, and we’re the largest private regulator of the securities industry in the United States.

“Anybody who sells stocks, bonds (and) mutual funds in the United States is regulated by us,” said Francis Dong, associate director of the FINRA Investor Education Foundation.

“We’re partners in the DoD financial readiness campaign,” Dong said and, as such, have traveled to dozens of military installations and reached more than 18,000 servicemembers and their families around the world in three and a half years.

Until 2007, FINRA was the National

Association of Securities Dealers, created along with the Securities and Exchange Commission in the wake of the 1929 crash of the stock market, according to Dong.

Empowered to fine companies who violate the rules and laws of dealing financial instruments,

FINRA used part of a \$12 million settlement to establish its military program, the largest in its education arsenal, according to Dong.

“Why the military? Well, the military is a population that has a steady income and, therefore, is of interest to business” trying to make money, he said.

“And we have done some research and found that the military does need some more sophistication in terms of finance.”

Regarding finances, the military audience is not much different than its civilian counterpart, according to Darryl Jones, USAG Schweinfurt financial readiness program manager.

“In fact, it does pertain to them, because they end up with the same result as their average civilian does – lot of debt, high credit card interest rate, buying cars with high interest rates and things like that,” Jones said.

“So it’s very important for us to be more

“We’re trying to help educate the public so they can understand finance better and get involved in making better choices, asking the right questions and understanding the answers that are given.”

Francis Dong
FINRA Investor Education Foundation



Courtesy photo

The Financial Industry Regulatory Authority has educational tools available online at www.saveandinvest.org.

concerned, because there are businesses that use the military for scams.”

And the days of the gold watch and steady pension after a 30-year career with the same company are largely gone, according to Dong.

“Now people pretty much have to select their investments, through their 401(k)s and so on,” Dong said.

“We’re trying to help educate the public so they can understand finance better and get involved in making better choices, asking the

right questions and understanding the answers that are given.”

Jones was grateful for the opportunity to bring a Wall Street and Washington powerhouse like FINRA to the USAG Schweinfurt.

“They bring additional resources and education right to our doorstep that we don’t normally see and deal with every day,” Jones said.

The FINRA Investor Education Foundation has objective and educational tools at its Web site www.saveandinvest.org.

Pentagon civilian personnel system faces review

by **GERRY J. GILMORE**
American Forces Press Service

The Defense Department will undertake a comprehensive review of the National Security Personnel System to ascertain whether it is fair and transparent to participating employees, a senior Pentagon official said March 16.

Deputy Defense Secretary William J. Lynn III directed the NSPS review, Brad Bunn, the Defense Department’s program executive officer for NSPS, told Pentagon Channel and American Forces Press Service reporters. Lynn is the senior civilian executive overseeing NSPS at the Pentagon.

The Pentagon’s review will provide

officials the opportunity to “look at the [NSPS] system in a comprehensive manner, to understand how it has been operating, and to chart a path forward for the future of NSPS and how it is going to go forward in the Department of Defense,” Bunn said.

The Office of Personnel Management, which jointly publishes regulations with the Defense Department, covering NSPS, will conduct a separate review, Bunn said.

The Pentagon’s review, he said, probably will take “several months” to complete.

The scheduled transfer this spring and fall of about 3,000 additional Defense Department civilians into

NSPS will be delayed pending the outcome of the review, Bunn said.

“We’re going to delay any further conversions of organizations and employees into NSPS while leadership can conduct this review,” Bunn said. Members of Congress, other federal agencies, personnel experts, labor organizations and other stakeholders, he said, will be included as part of the review process.

The more than 200,000 Defense Department civilians who have been transferred into NSPS since the system began three years ago, Bunn said, will continue to operate under current NSPS policies and procedures. Most defense civilians who were slated for transfer into NSPS already have done

so, he said.

NSPS was developed as part of former Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld’s program to transform the way the Defense Department does business to better meet the challenges of the 21st century.

NSPS’s pay-for-performance system replaced 50-year-old civil service rules that rewarded employees for length of service, rather than performance.

“NSPS is a pretty significant change in how we hire, pay and compensate and reward our civilian employees who support the national security mission in the Department of Defense,” Bunn said.

There are “varying viewpoints

that exist out there on NSPS,” Bunn acknowledged. Internal surveys, he said, indicate that some defense employees are unhappy with NSPS, particularly with regard to performance evaluations.

“There are questions and concerns about the fairness of the system, its transparency, whether it is actually being operated based on the design principles,” Bunn said. “So, those kinds of questions are being asked, and those are the concerns that a review will focus on.”

The department is committed to operating fair, transparent and effective personnel systems, Bunn said.

“And this review is a demonstration of that commitment,” he said.



AN ARMY FIRST

Col. Kyle T. Burke, joint project manager for Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Contamination Avoidance based out of Maryland, addresses soldiers of Grafenwoehr’s 12th Chemical Company March 17.

The company is responsible for fielding the first and only Joint NBC Reconnaissance System kits in the Army.

The kits will soon be used widely throughout the Army both in theatre and for homeland defense and disaster relief.

Photo by Melissa Wolff

Freedom Team Salute honors, appreciates military supporters

by KIM GILLESPIE
USAG Grafenwoehr PAO

Parents, spouses, children, neighbors, business owners, teachers, etc., may all play a significant role in supporting our Soldiers.

It is a role top military officials, as well as those serving in combat, appreciate.

It is a role Lynn Heirakuji, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army Manpower and reserve Affairs (Personnel Oversight) paid tribute to March 12 in Grafenwoehr.

Heirakuji spoke to Soldiers and spouses of the 2d Stryker Cavalry Regiment before presenting Freedom Team Salute awards.

The Freedom Team Salute program is a way for Soldiers to show appreciation for the support they receive while in combat.

The Freedom Team Salute program shows appreciation with a personal certificate and letter from the Secretary of the Army and the Army Chief of Staff, a lapel pin and a decal (or bumper sticker for parents). In this way the program honors individuals while building stronger ties to the community and support for the Army Family, according to Rich Breen, retired Army Colonel and the outreach leader for Freedom Team Salute Europe.

"That commendation packet might just be the pat on the back that an Army supporter needs so they know that what they're doing is making a difference," Michelle McLaughlin, a Freedom Team Salute honoree and a program ambassador, said.

"It might also be the pat on the back that an Army spouse or child

needs to make it through another day during a deployment."

Freedom Team Salute is an Army program that allows Soldiers and other individuals associated with the Army to recognize and thank those people who make sacrifices and commitments for Soldiers.

"The program was designed so Soldiers or individuals can nominate supporters by completing a simple online form," Breen said.

There are specific categories for nomination – parents, spouses, employers (for Guard and Reserve Soldiers) and veterans, but there is also a new category that allows anyone who supports the Army mission to be honored.

The commemoration is free and can be mailed directly to the nominee or may be presented at an appropriate ceremony.

"Freedom Team Salute can become part of any Soldier recognition or gathering – promotions, awards, retirements, changes of command/responsibility, Soldier/NCO competitions, appreciation or organization days, FRG (Family Readiness Group) activities and even events like the Month of the Military Child and Military Appreciation Month which are coming up," Breen said.

While Breen sees every commendation and event as a success story, his goal is to strengthen relationships.

"The Ambassador Program is what really brings the program together.

"The Ambassador Program consists of volunteers who raise local awareness by coordinating events and commendations ceremonies," Breen explained.



Photo by Melissa Wolff

Lynn Heirakuji, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army Manpower and reserve Affairs (Personnel Oversight), pays tribute to Freedom Team Salute recipients March 12 in Vilseck.

Breen is hoping that FRG leaders and Family Readiness Support Assistants in the U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr footprint will become ambassadors and help organize unit level events.

"There is an ambassador in Hohenfels, Karen Cooper, and Michelle McLaughlin of Grafenwoehr," he added.

McLaughlin, a mobilization and deployment specialist for Army Community Service, was familiar with the Freedom Team Salute program after being honored by her husband during his third deployment.

"I was touched that he could take the time to do this during his hectic schedule downrange," McLaughlin said of the Salute.

McLaughlin's husband was deployed four times in the past nine years and she said she remembered how tough things could get while raising four children, working and volunteering full-time.

"After meeting with Mr. Breen and finding out that I could volunteer to 'get the word out' about this program and help to recognize people, I felt I had to," she said.

Information about Freedom Team Salute, the Ambassador Program and nomination process is available at the www.FreedomTeamSalute.com Web site.

For questions the site does not answer, or if additional information is needed, e-mail Breen at Richard.Breen@live.com.

Spotlight on Education



NAME: Sarah Johnson

What grade do you teach? Grade 6.

Hometown: I was born and raised in Georgia.

How long have you been a teacher? 20 years.

What do you enjoy most about teaching?

The children. They are diverse and very interesting to observe and interact with.

What advice can you give students to help them succeed in school?

Don't give up; no matter what the situation or circumstance might be, don't give up. You are special and you were born for success

Storytelling festival educates community

172nd Infantry Brigade PAO

The Schweinfurt and Grafenwoehr communities received a visit by three uniquely talented individuals the first week of March.

Nationally recognized storytellers Susan Klein of Massachusetts, Baba Jamal Koram of

Virginia, and Sandy Oglesby of Arizona, shared the joy and wonder of their stories with elementary school children and families.

The event planner and coordinator, Nena Stetson, worked with both communities' Child, Youth and School Age Services representatives, Family Readiness Groups and other agencies to

organize the events into community-wide opportunities to learn about the importance and impact of stories.

In both locations, the FRGs, community service agencies, CYSS and Department of Defense employees got into the mix and assisted in creating community showcase events.

The storytelling festival was made possible with the financial support of the Blackhawk Shield Association based out of Schweinfurt, where it works to support Soldiers and their families – especially during deployments.

Between the two communities, more than 1,200 children felt and visualized the magic the visitors created through their words.

The storytellers drew the children into their story, having them participate by singing and shouting answers and sometimes even creating part of the story as it unfolded.

"Storytelling is an ancient art form, yet it resonates with contemporary audiences through 'voice to voice and heart to heart interaction,'" said Klein. "Well told stories, using techniques gained through years of storytelling, not reading them from a book, can ignite and inspire the imagination of children and adults alike as visual images take shape in the mind's eye."

During their visit, the storytellers held performances for students at both Schweinfurt and

Netzaberg Elementary Schools. They also held small group sessions with third, fourth and fifth graders, giving the students an opportunity to ask about the art of storytelling.

"The children were thrilled with their visitors and could be heard in the hallways and at recess repeating parts of the tales they had heard," said Sandy Oglesby one of the three visiting storytellers, "That's how we know when we're making an impact."

Before ending their tour, the storytellers worked with educators to help them enhance their skills and lesson plans through stories.

Klein said she hopes the festival will serve as more than a colorful memory to the children and that it will inspire children to be more creative as they explore different ways to share stories. "I hope that the community can use this event as a starting point for developing its own storytelling club," she added.

To Oglesby, the event and such a club is about more than the story. "It's about connecting families and people together through (the) telling of the story; values and lessons can be learned and relationships enhanced."

"These kinds of events bring the community together" said LTC Eric Stetson, Blackhawk Task Force Shield commander. "The event brought a little magic to us all."

Children interact with a visiting storyteller March 7 at Netzaberg Elementary School.

Photo by Ann Bruennig



Miss Nelson is Missing!



The cast of Miss Nelson is Missing! takes to the stage for a final rehearsal as they prepare for the first show Friday at the Grafenwoehr Performing Arts Center. The play, which is based on the popular Miss Nelson storybook series begins, at 7 p.m., Friday and April 2-4. It starts at 2 p.m. on Saturday, Sunday and April 5. For more, contact Joline Powell, PAC director, at CIV 09641-83-6426.

Photos by Melissa Wolff

Stop-loss stops in January, Soldiers to be compensated

by C. TODD LOPEZ
Army News Service

The Army plans to phase out its reliance on stop-loss by January, leaders say.

Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates announced Thursday a phased plan to begin cutting off stop-loss later this year.

During a discussion with members of the press, Lt. Gen. Michael Rochelle, deputy chief of staff for Personnel, G-1, discussed the Army's plan to implement the phased reduction in use of the program that involuntarily extends Soldiers beyond the end of their enlistment or retirement dates in units deploying to combat areas.

"It has been a vital tool that has allowed the Army to sustain cohesive operational forces that train and serve together through their deployments," Rochelle said.

The general said the president's recent announcement of a troop drawdown in Iraq, a gradual restoration of balance between deployments, and an increase in the size of the Army have given the service the opportunity to reduce stop-loss.

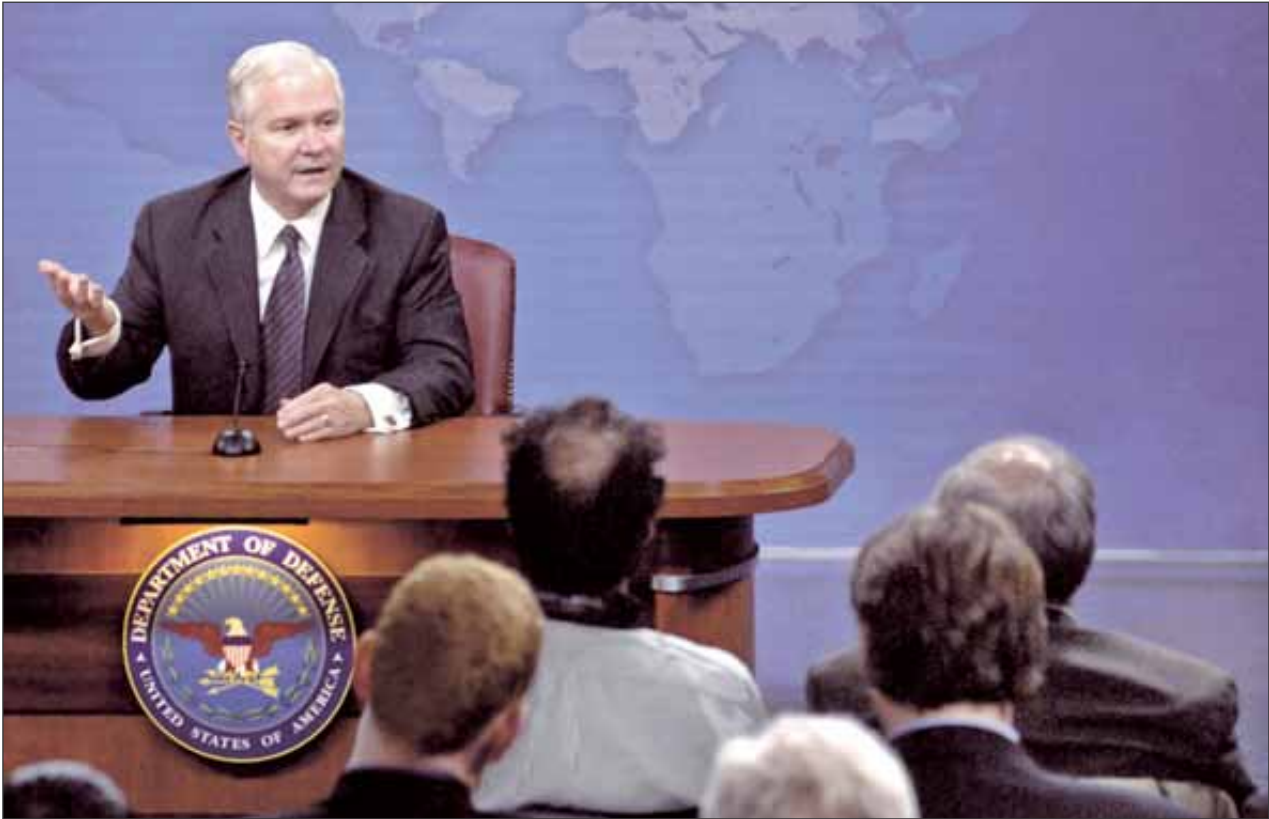
Rochelle said the number of Soldiers affected by stop-loss will be reduced, in a phased approach, across all components of the Army.

The Army Reserve will begin mobilizing units without stop-loss in August, he said.

For the National Guard, that will happen in September. For the active-duty Army, the change will happen in January.

"This is great news for the Army family," Rochelle said. "Limiting stop-loss balances our need for unit effectiveness with the impact on individual Soldiers and their families."

Rochelle also said the Army will implement a special congressionally



Courtesy photo

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates responds to a reporter's question during a press conference at the Pentagon, March 18. Gates announced a comprehensive plan to eliminate the current use of "stop-loss" policy while retaining the authority for future use under extraordinary circumstances.

approved payment for Soldiers currently affected by stop-loss.

Soldiers who are under stop-loss this month will begin receiving a \$500 per month payment on top of their regular pay for the months they serve on stop-loss.

That payment will begin with their March pay, which Soldiers see in their April 1 check.

The congressional approval also allows the Army to retroactively pay Soldiers as far back as Oct. 1, 2008 for time served under stop-loss. Most

Soldiers that qualify to receive the retroactive payments will receive that money in May or June as a lump-sum payment, Rochelle said.

Additionally, the \$500 per month payments for stop-loss time served in a combat tax-exclusion zone will not be taxed, said Col. Larry Lock, Army director of compensation and entitlements.

The funds Congress appropriated for stop-loss pay are only for Fiscal Year 2009, which runs Oct. 1, 2008 through Sept. 30, 2009.

Future funding is being discussed.

Rochelle pointed out that there is risk associated in eliminating the use of stop-loss, such as an unexpected demand for forces beyond what the Army anticipates.

But he said such things as the projected reduction of forces in Iraq will mitigate that risk.

"Let's not diminish the significance of the reduction in demand, anticipated as a result of the drawdown in Iraq. The anticipated reduction in demand, recently announced by President

Obama, is a major factor," Rochelle said. He added that were demand not so high for Army forces around the world, the Army would eliminate stop-loss "tomorrow."

An additional factor in the Army's ability to pare down its use of stop-loss is that the service was able to meet its resize objectives ahead of schedule.

"The Army has now achieved its end strength growth to its (547,400) end strength, three years ahead of schedule," Rochelle said. "We were on track and projected to achieve that growth through 2012 -- we are there now."

Thirdly, he said, is the Army's enterprise-wide approach to match up accessions, individual training and leader development training with the Army's Force Generation.

Rochelle said the Army will create a policy to offer incentives to Soldiers to encourage them to extend their enlistment beyond their date of separation in order to allow them to stay with their unit for the duration of a deployment.

Those incentives would most likely be financial, said Maj. Gen. Gina Farrisee, director of personnel management.

"I think it would be safe to say they will be monetary incentives, but the policy has not been written yet as to what the incentives will be," she said.

"We would offer incentives for people to extend through the deployment. We currently do not offer extensions. You may re-enlist, and re-enlist only. We would now offer incentives to extend through the deployment and we hope that that would help to continue to fill the unit as needed."

There are currently around 13,000 Soldiers affected by stop-loss within all three components of the Army.

Cost of living allowance to decrease starting in May

USAREUR Public Affairs Office

U.S. Army Europe Soldiers will see a drop in their monthly cost of living allowance payments starting in May, finance officials announced last week.

Officials at the Department of Defense Per Diem, Travel and Transportation Committee said overseas COLA is designed to help keep servicemembers' purchasing power about the same as their counterparts stationed in the continental U.S.

"The allowance is intended to offset the high costs of some goods overseas, but only to a level equal to what families are experiencing in CONUS," Stephen Westbrook, director of the per diem committee told delegates to the U.S. European Command Quality of Life conference March 11.

"It is not intended to reimburse servicemembers' expenses, nor is it designed to compensate for nonavailability of items."

"The bottom line is that prices in the United States are rising at a higher pace than in Europe, so the gap has narrowed and COLA is going down accordingly," said Col. Mary L. Ensminger, U.S. Air Forces in Europe Directorate of Financial Management and Comptroller.

Finance officials said the reduction will be

phased in from May through August to ease the financial burden on servicemembers, finance officials said.

For example, a servicemember in the pay grade of E6 with three family members will see his monthly COLA rate drop from the current \$628 to \$418.67 by August in increments of about \$52.33 per month during that period, according to estimates provided by officials at USAREUR's 266th Financial Management Center.

Annual survey data from Germany and the rate of inflation data collected in the United States during the last two years show the purchasing power gap has narrowed from 24 to 16 percent because the prices of goods and services in the U.S. are rising at a greater rate than in Germany, finance officials said.

Westbrook recommended that families pay attention to financial trends in the United States to better understand changes to their overseas COLA.

"Remember that you receive COLA only when the cost of living in your area is higher than it is in the United States," he said.

Editor's Note: This article was compiled from releases and information from the Department of Defense, U.S. European Command, U.S. Air Forces in Europe and the 266th Financial Management Center.

“The bottom line is that prices in the United States are rising at a higher pace than in Europe, so the gap has narrowed and COLA is going down accordingly.”

Col. Mary L. Ensminger
USAFE Directorate of Financial Management and Comptroller

Alcohol self-assessment helps identify drinking problems

Special to the Bavarian News

If alcohol is tearing you apart, there is a new way to start putting the pieces back together - a free, anonymous online alcohol self-assessment is available at www.MilitaryMentalHealth.org.

According to Karen Collins, U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr's Army Substance Abuse Program prevention coordinator, sometimes people under stress turn to alcohol to feel better. She said, one drink leads to four and a fun Friday night leads to a hangover Saturday morning. Often, individuals feel guilty about their drinking habits but feel unable to stop. Some hide their drinking, and others don't know how much is too much.

For most adults, Collins said, moderate alcohol use causes few, if any, problems. But for some, any alcohol use may lead to significant health problems or affect the ability to perform optimally at work. Trying to determine if there is a problem isn't easy, but the free online screening is a good place to start, according to Collins.

Alcohol abuse is one of three key health issues identified by the Department of Defense, along with weight management and tobacco

cessation.

The goal of the screening is to educate military personnel and their families about the potential risks associated with drinking. Through education, awareness and understanding, Collins said individuals can make informed decisions about their drinking behaviors.

The Mental Health Self-Assessment Program is a voluntary, anonymous mental health and alcohol self-assessment and referral program offered to military families and service members affected by deployment.

The program is accessible online 24/7, and through local in-person events. It is offered without charge through the DoD Office of Health Affairs.

Within USAG Grafenwoehr, the Army Substance Abuse Program office will be observing National Alcohol Screening Day on April 9. Contact your local ASAP program coordinator for events.

In Grafenwoehr, ASAP staff members will be outside of the Post Exchange to conduct the screening. For more, contact Collins at DSN 475-1710 or at karen.collins2@eur.army.mil.

Alcohol Facts

- Young men, aged 18-25, have been found to have the highest prevalence of heavy alcohol use within the military
- The rate for heavy alcohol use among young military males is also approximately twice the rate of their civilian counterparts
- Women overall drink less than men but are more likely to experience adverse consequences, including damage to the heart muscle, liver, and brain, trauma resulting from auto crashes, interpersonal violence, and death
- Alcohol can damage a fetus at any stage of pregnancy. Damage can occur in the earliest weeks of pregnancy, even before a woman knows that she is pregnant. Therefore, no amount of alcohol consumption can be considered safe during pregnancy
- Moderate alcohol use is defined as up to two drinks per day for men and one drink per day for women and older people. (One drink equals one 12-ounce bottle of beer or wine cooler, one 5-ounce glass of wine, or 1.5 ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits.)

Craft Tree turns treasure into work of art

Story and photo by
JOHN REESE
USAG Garmisch PAO

Take four precious documents and a functional samurai sword, put a frame within a frame, add bamboo matting for the background and make the weapon easy to access for any contingency, and you have another big project completed by the award-winning Garmisch Crafts Tree.

“The customer came in with certificates from many years ago. The request was to archive the certificates in a way that they’d last forever protected behind glass,” said Michele Schneider, manager. “At the same time the entire presentation had a sword that can be grabbed and used, and all of that had to be in one display.”

The customer, Judoka, swordsman and Marshall Center chief of classroom support Warren Harris, received the samurai sword as a gift from his son, and wanted to display the sword with his black belt certificates in judo.

“This is a real samurai sword,” said Harris, who collects and uses edged weapons. “It isn’t an antique going back hundreds of years, but it is collectable - all swords are collectable.”

His Judo certificates are from his progression from first to fourth “Dan” or level, the oldest dating back about four decades. Traditionally the lower Dans are called judo practitioners, while those of the 4th Dan or higher are called Judoka, or judo expert.

“In 2007 I was awarded the 4th Dan. They take time and years,” said Harris, explaining that he took the slower method of non-competition to achieve his ranking. “You get promoted faster if you compete.”

Schneider worked out some ideas. Her solution was to place a picture within a picture, with the judo certificates framed within a giant shadowbox and the sword mounted below.



It took Warren Harris decades to reach the 4th Dan black belt in judo and to become an accomplished sword fighter, weeks to create a suitable display for his certificates and one of his swords, but only seconds to remove and unsheathe the samurai’s weapon of choice.

“It wasn’t a quick and easy project. The really tough part to find causing the longest delay was the textured bamboo matting for the background of the shadowbox,” Schneider added. It was the right base for the large project, but it was hard to get.

“We didn’t want just a regular paper mat board,” said Schneider, softly tracing her fingertips across the bamboo. “We were playing with leather, wallpaper, all sorts of things, and then we said we’ll go a little bit more extravagant.”

She bounced design ideas off of Harris and eventually found the right combination to create an elegant yet functional work of art the size of a door.

Harris hefted the katana with an experienced hand as he described the importance of something as subtle as the facing direction of the blade.

“When the blade was up, that simulated that they were in combat, that a war was going on. When the sword was turned around and the blade facing down, that means that they were at peace,” explained Harris.

Caring for a good Japanese sword is both practical and ceremonial, said Harris.

“When you clean a samurai sword by Japanese standards it’s not just one-two-three wipe it clean. You don’t ever want to touch these types of blades,” said Harris. “That causes problems with rust over time.”

The oil from fingerprints left on the steel could leave a permanent stain, so a combination of rice paper and a special polishing powder are used to clean the blade after use. Curious people want to rub their fingers across the edge to confirm that its razor sharp.

“The marks are very difficult to get off,” Harris said

After the long wait to assemble the framing materials, the actual work to build the project took two weeks of cutting, gluing and drying. Harris picked up his functional object d’art March 18.

“If customers have special framing needs and want to do object framing, this is the place for it,” said Schneider. “Of course, we do frame regular pictures, too.”

More about the Garmisch Crafts Tree, the 2007 winner of the Army’s best small installation crafts shop, will follow in a future issue of the Bavarian News.



The Division 1 group from Garmisch Elementary/Middle School performs the Lost Labor of Hercules. Students developed a skit telling the story of a thirteenth labor that Hercules had to perform in order to become a god and how the labor became lost in history.

Students advance to regional level of Odyssey of the Mind competition

Story and photo by
SHANDA LONKHURST
Special to the Bavarian News

Four teams of Garmisch Elementary/Middle School students traveled to Hohenfels Middle School February 27 to compete in the district competition of Odyssey of the Mind, a creative problem-solving program.

Sets, costumes, and original scripts were part of the challenges for students from across Bavaria.

Each school sent four teams comprised of seven students and an adult coach. Students spent weeks or months in advance creating solutions to long term problems.

The teams were scored for meeting the requirements of the problem and

for their creativity in categories specific to each problem.

Each presentation was no more than eight minutes long and had to be completely student-produced. Additionally, each team is presented with a spontaneous problem that had to be solved on the day of the competition.

Three of the four Garmisch teams qualified to move on to the next round of competition.

There were three long term problems to choose from: Earth Trek, Teach Yer Creature, and The Lost Labor of Hercules. Two teams competed in the Lost Labor of Hercules and one each from the other two problems.

A team’s standing in the

competition was determined by their combined long-term score, style score and spontaneous score.

The regional competition will take place in Kaiserslautern on March 27.

If they place first or second in that competition they are eligible to travel continue to the Odyssey of the Mind World Finals taking place in Iowa in May.

Odyssey of the Mind, a non-profit agency, began with 28 New Jersey schools in 1978 as a creative problem-solving competition for young students.

It has since become an international favorite with teams of students from around the world learning from and teaching each other.

GARRISON SNAPSHOTS



Photo by John Reese

Meghan McAndrew (left), director of the Garmisch Teen Center, guides art judges Dorry Hummer, Isabella Marker and Michele Schneider to watercolor and oil paintings by the youngest artists of Garmisch and communities all over Europe. The artwork was showcased at the Boys and Girls Club of America Regional Fine Arts Exhibit that opened last week in the grand ballroom of the Edelweiss Lodge and Resort.



Photo by John Reese

Bavarian State Minister Siegfried Schneider (left) visited the USAG Garmisch headquarters on Artillery Kaserne March 19 to meet the garrison officers and for an overview on the impact of the US Army in Southern Bavaria. The briefing was conducted by Garrison Manager Karin H. Santos with Julio Gutierrez, Army International Liaison Officer.

Barracks, child care among top issues at Army Family Action Plan conference

by KRISTIN BRADLEY
Bavarian News

U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels held its third annual Army Family Action Plan conference Feb. 24 - 26, providing community members a way to communicate their concerns with garrison, Installation Management Command-Europe and Department of the Army leadership.

Chris Saucedo, deputy garrison commander, extended his thanks to every Hohenfels community member that submitted an issue to the conference facilitated by Army Community Service.

“By submitting quality of life issues and concerns, you have let the command know what things we are doing right and what things need improvement. The command always strives to exceed our customer’s expectations and this valuable community service would not be possible without issues submitted by the community,” Saucedo said.

He also thanked those who volunteered their time during the conference.

“To all of those who participated in the actual conference, your dedication and service was invaluable. Each role was vital to the overall success of the conference.”

Twenty-four conference delegates discussed 114 issues submitted by community members and after conferring with subject matter experts, crafted recommendations for solutions.

According to Carol Stone, AFAP program coordinator, some issues are workable at the garrison level, while some needed to be passed up to the IMCOM-E or even DA level conferences for resolution.

She also said previous issues cannot be discussed again for three years. For example, an issue discussed last year and submitted again this year was not worked at the 2009 conference.

Following are the top six most important issues as described by and voted upon by delegates. Some will be submitted to the IMCOM-E conference, held in June, for further discussion while some have been assigned to garrison departments that will report back to Stone with their plan of action.

In the coming months, check the Hometown Happenings newsletter, daily news briefs and the garrison website at www.hohenfels.army.mil for a complete list of issues. Check upcoming issues of the Bavarian News for follow-up information about issues being worked within the garrison.

Issue 1: Hohenfels barracks

Currently command teams are not utilizing available barracks space efficiently. According to Army Regulation 420-1 (Army Facility Management), February 2008, junior enlisted Soldiers (E1-E4) are entitled to 90 square feet of space and junior noncommissioned officers (E5-E6) are entitled to 135 square feet. There is a lack of education among command teams on proper utilization of available garrison living space.

This lack of communication and education causes a portion of the 670 single Soldiers in Hohenfels to be inadequately housed. The integration of NCOs and enlisted Soldiers into the same billeting limits the number of personnel that can be housed in current available living space.

Recommendation: Establish a system through housing to educate leaders, Soldiers and command teams on Army Regulation 420-1. Authorize commands to allow E-5 and E-6 single Soldiers to live off post when barracks space is not available. Establish a USAG Hohenfels standard operating procedure on implementation based on the IMCOM First Sergeant Barracks Initiative. Develop and publish a timeline to implement and enforce the First Sergeant Barracks Initiative.

Update: 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, the USAG Hohenfels Department of Public Works and garrison leadership are currently working on a plan of action for this issue.

Issue 2: Retiree benefits

The provision of the Federal Minister of Finance III B 2 – Z 1757 – 13/79 does not allow military retirees, retiree dependents, survivors and annuitants who are not command sponsored to utilize military benefits in Germany.

Within the Federal Republic of Germany there are approximately 3,200 registered retirees, retiree dependents, survivors and annuitants. Non-command sponsored ID card holders should have the privilege of using Army Air Force Exchange Service and Defense Commissary Agency facilities without having to use a tax card (only available if the ID card holder will be in Germany for more than 30 days.)

Inability to utilize on post facilities results in financial hardship and shows a lack of respect for their service.

Recommendation: Amend the provision of the Federal Minister of Finance to allow military retirees, retiree dependents, survivors and annuitants the AAFES and DeCA benefits they receive in the United States without the use of a tax card from German customs.

Note: According to Julius Morales, USAG Hohenfels customs inspector, an amendment to the provision can only be negotiated between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Status of Forces Agreement and the German Federal Ministry of Finance.

Update: This issue has been passed up to the

IMCOM-E conference.

Issue 3: DODDS bus safety

Safety infractions resulting in bus suspensions have continued to increase on Department Of Defense Dependents Schools school buses.

During the 2008 fiscal school year there were six confirmed bus suspensions in Hohenfels. Thirty-one bus suspensions have been reported so far in the 2009 fiscal school year, which is more than a 500 percent increase from the previous year.

The lack of supervision on school buses creates an environment where physical and verbal aggression, sometimes leading to violent behavior, jeopardizes the safety of DoDDS students. Safety is further complicated by the language barrier between the bus driver, security attendant and students.

Recommendation: Amend contracts to require security attendants to enforce bus safety rules for DoDDS students. Create family member employment opportunities utilizing fluent English speakers in security attendant positions. Implement a bus safety patrol where older students

patrol student safety.

Update: Because this is an issue that must be worked within DoDDs, it has been passed up to the IMCOM-E conference.

Issue 4: Hourly childcare program

There is not an hourly childcare program provided to military and civilian family members from 6 a.m. - 6 p.m., Monday through Friday. Parents, guardians and volunteers are experiencing difficulty in obtaining hourly childcare slots. The lack of childcare slots affects parents’ and guardians’ ability to attend scheduled appointments. The lack of childcare slots also affects volunteers who provide necessary services important to military communities.

Recommendation: Request additional funding with an hourly program for remote installations with fewer than 240 children in the Child Development Center. Establish and implement an hourly childcare program from 6 a.m. - 6 p.m., Monday through Friday. Increase staffing to accommodate an hourly childcare program.

Update: This issue was passed up to the IMCOM-E conference.

Issue 5: Road condition notifications

Road condition notification systems are inadequate and untimely for the Hohenfels community and surrounding areas.

According to a conference subject matter expert, the garrison commander receives information collected by the military police between 3 - 4 a.m. to make a decision at 5 a.m. for road conditions at 7 a.m. Failure to update the notification system adversely affects more than 85 percent of the Hohenfels community members that reside off post due to unsafe road conditions.

Recommendation: Establish a community call-in line to allow for community members to report hazardous road conditions. Amend the weather notification system so that specific community areas of responsibility are identified as more hazardous based on all information collected by military police and community call-in line.

Update: The USAG Hohenfels Department of Emergency Services is working on a plan of action for this issue.

Issue 6: Leash-free dog area

The Hohenfels community has a need for a designated dog exercise and training area.

Many Soldiers, civilians and family members live in housing areas that lack suitable space for dogs to receive adequate exercise and training. The German leash laws and safety concerns restrict dogs from exercising freely.

Dogs are an important part of many families and having a leash-free exercise and training area will increase the well being of dogs and their owners.

Recommendation: Construct a designated fenced in area on post for dog owners to bring their dogs for exercise and training. Equip the area with trash receptacles, recycling bags and a sitting area for owners. Amend garrison Policy Letter #21 to allow dogs to run free in designated areas.

Update: USAG Hohenfels Department of Public Works and Family, Morale, Welfare and Recreation are working on a plan of action for this issue.

Steering committee items

During the AFAP steering committee meeting after the conference, garrison leadership also sent an issue involving overseas drivers license testing for Soldiers and family members up to the IMCOM-E conference.

According to Stone, the U.S. Air Force currently has a program that allows airmen and their family members to obtain their U.S. Army Europe drivers license before they move to Germany, thus relieving the difficulties encountered by not being able to drive upon arriving at their new duty station.

Conference delegates and garrison leaders suggest that the Army implement a similar program.

Delegates also voted upon the top five services at Hohenfels they felt were most helpful. The services, in order, were: medical care, ACS, AAFES, FMWR, and housing.

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Chris Saucedo
Deputy garison commander

Women applauded, challenged to lead

Sgt. Major Linda Freno, U.S. Army Europe Equal Opportunity advisor, addresses a full dining room at the U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels Women’s History Month luncheon March 11 at the Warrior Sports Café.

Freno said she chose not to focus on this year’s theme “Women Taking the Lead to Save Our Planet,” because she sees the role of protector as one women naturally assume.

“I just think it’s something women do every day. We’re protectors. Whether it’s the earth, our kids, or our way of life. It’s just something we do naturally,” she said. Instead she chose to focus on the strength women possess and on women in general instead of singing the praises of a few famous women.

“I ask you to remember those before us who didn’t get their month on the calendar. Remember those before us who paved the way for our sister Soldiers to lead from the front with their heads held high with the full understanding that the decisions that they continue to make will ensure the mission becomes a better one.”

Most of all, Freno stressed that no matter how heavy the burden on her shoulders a strong woman will always find a way to stand up.

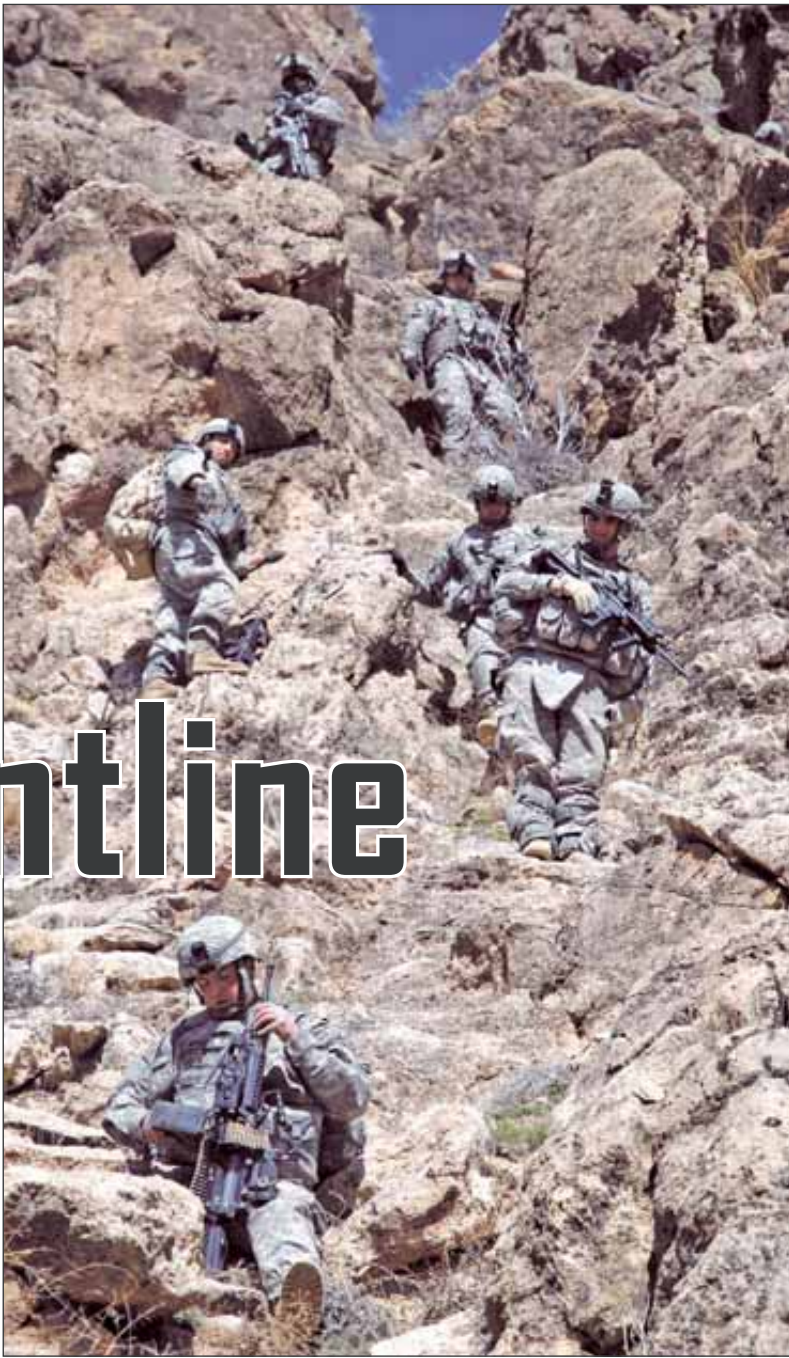
Referencing the illustration on the luncheon program of a women with the world on her shoulders and one knee on the ground she said, “Ladies, I ask you and implore you to get up and stabilize all that you love and remember never falter, never fail, and if it feels like you are going to fall down on one knee like the lady in the picture, like so many women before you, I must remind you that the strength within you will enable you to get up.”

Photo by Kristin Bradley





1st Lt. Larry Baca (right) of Co. C, 1-4 Inf. shows 1st Lt. Jared Tomberlin of Co. B the view from a ridge near FOB Lane in the Zabul province of Afghanistan Feb. 21.



Bravo to the frontline

JMRC’s Viper team was recently in Afghanistan with Company B, 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment from Hohenfels and captured images of the Soldiers at work.

Above, Spc. Jackie Greenlee, medic, and an interpreter provide care to a special needs child in a village near FOB Lane Feb. 28.

Far right, Soldiers descend a cliff during a dismounted patrol near FOB Lane Feb. 26.

Right, 1st Lt. Jared Tomberlin (left) and an interpreter provide security atop a mountain ridge during a reconnaissance mission near FOB Lane Feb. 28.

Photos by Staff Sgt. Adam Mancini



1st Lt. Patrick Higgins (foreground), Spc. Aaron Trapley, Sgt. Gary Fordyce and Sgt. Nicholas Gauthier survey a village near FOB Mizan, Afghanistan, Feb. 23.



Pfc. Ryan Coelho, medic, treats a boy who needs a tooth extraction at a clinic near FOB Lane in the Zabul province of Afghanistan on Feb. 25.

What’s Happening

Grafenwoehr/ Vilseck Briefs

Celebrate Women’s History

Join the Garrison Friday from 11 a.m.–1 p.m. in the Rose Barracks Multi-Purpose Bldg. 134.

Features include a guest speaker, food sampling from 11-11:30 a.m., a recipient will be awarded the “Prestigious Environmental Award” (first time ever to be award by the National Women’s Project), an essay contest by the elementary school and more.

For information call DSN 475-8038.

“Miss Nelson is Missing”

“Miss Nelson is Missing!” by Jeffrey Hatcher comes to life at the Grafenwoehr Performing Arts Center March 27 & April 2-4 at 7 p.m., and March 28-29 & April 5 at 2 p.m.

Anti-terrorism training

Mandatory SAEDA, SETA and Anti-terrorism Training takes place:

April 1: Grafenwoehr (Camp Aachen Theater, Bldg 2060) 9–11:30 a.m. a.m. (US), 1:30 - 2:30 p.m. (LN)

April 2: Vilseck (Post Theater, Bldg 354) 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. (LN), 1:30 - 4 p.m. (US).

Special Olympics

The annual Kaiserslautern Special Olympics Spring Games will be held May 6 in nearby Enkenbach.

Hundreds of volunteers are needed, including more than 700 Buddies to the athletes.

If you wish to volunteer as a Buddy or for another position contact [Larry Zani@compuserve.com](mailto:Larry_Zani@compuserve.com).

Family fitness walk

Come out and join CYS Services for the annual CYS Family Fitness Walk April 3 at 9 a.m. in front of the Rose Barracks CDC.

Blood drives

Give the gift of life. Make an appointment for donation at www.military-lifeforce.com.

April 8: Grafenwoehr Blood Drive at the Field House, Bldg. 547, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

April 9: Vilseck Blood Drive at the Rose Barracks Memorial Gym, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Earthworms to perform

The hip-hop group Earthworms will perform at Rose Barracks Memorial Gym April 10 at 8 p.m.

For more on the Earthworms visit <http://www.armedforcesentertainment.com/Earthworms.htm>.

Midnight Madness

The Midnight Madness Basketball

Tournament cancelled earlier is now rescheduled for April 25. Registration deadline is April 10. It is a Unit and Troop Level, Single Elimination Basketball Tournament.

For more, call DSN 475-9024 or DSN 476-2214, CIV 09641-839024 or CIV 09662-832214

Tax centers are open

Scheduled appointments and walk-ins are available daily, with extended hours several days a week.

In Graf, call DSN 475-9258, CIV 09641-83-9258, in Vilseck DSN 476-2714, CIV 09662-83-2714 for more.

Youth skiing

CYSS offers weekly ski trips to Mehlmeisel ski slope Wednesday afternoons for youth 8-10 years of age, and Friday evening for youth 11-18.

For more, call DSN 476-4037, CIV 09662-83-4037.

Travel opportunities

To sign-up for these trips, call Vilseck ITR DSN 476-2563, CIV 09662-83-2563, or Graf ODR DSN 475-7402, CIV 09662-83-7402.

- Barcelona, Costa Del Sol, Granada and Seville, Spain & Avignon, France, April 3-12
- Euro-Disney and Paris, April 6-9
- Mosel Wine and Medieval Castles, May 1-3
- Cinque Terre, Pisa, and Lucca Italy, May 21-25

VFW news

The Grafenwoehr VFW hosts an Open House every Wednesday at 6 p.m. Business meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m.

POC is Commander, James Holliman 0160-91423858, or Sr. Vice Commander Roger Schneider 0160-95877025.

Vilseck VFW holds an Open VFW night Thursdays for members and those curious, held at Bldg. 133 (located behind Vilseck Fire Station) 6-10 p.m. There will be food, fun, and cards.

KONTAKT Club

Check out your local German-American friendship organization, KONTAKT Clubs in Grafenwoehr, Vilseck and Amberg.

For more, call DSN 475-8885, CIV 09662-83-8885, or DSN 475-1600, CIV 09641-83-1600,visit: <http://www.kontakt-vilseck.de>

Employment Readiness

ACS Employment Readiness Program offers weekly e-mails of jobs available within USAG Grafenwoehr. Gain the skills you need to find the job you want. Call ACS at Vilseck CIV 09662-83-2650, or Graf CIV 09641-83-8371.

Identity theft

Identity theft is a worldwide problem.

Contact DuJon Moss, Certified Identity Theft Risk Management Specialist at CIV 0162-736-7148 to find out how you can stay safe.

Clinic appointments

You can now book your Vilseck Health Clinic appointments for you and your entire family from the comfort of your own home by following these steps:

1. Go to <https://www.tricareonline.com/welcome.do>
2. Click to agree to the terms and conditions
3. Click Register with TOL
4. Fill in the appropriate information for each family member

Estate claims

Anyone having claims on or obligations to the estate of SPC John S. Jeffries of 41st CTC, 18th CSSB, should contact the following summary court martial officer, 1LT James C. Simmons at DSN: 476-5120 or email james.c.simmons@us.army.mil.

Anyone having claims on or obligations to the estate of PV2 Court D. Haugen of RHHT, 2d SCR should contact the following summary court martial officer, 1LT Matthew M. Daigle at DSN 476-5045 or email matthew.m.daigle@eur.army.mil.

New MPA program

University of Maryland announces its Master of Public Administration Program, a 36 credit professional graduate degree, in Vilseck.

Call DSN 476-2462/6106, CIV 09662-83-2462/6106 for more.

Hohenfels Briefs

Gate 1 construction

Gate 1 will be closed to outbound traffic, and Gate 2 will be open to outbound traffic through April 23 and May 4-29. All other gates will operate as normal.Plan accordingly to prevent delays.

Tax Office update

The Legal Center’s Tax Office is open for appointments on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Thursdays are limited to walk-in appointments only. Current operating hours are: Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Tuesday, Thursday 9:30 to 5 p.m.

If you miss your appointment without calling in advance to cancel, you will only be able to come on Thursday during walk-in hours. For more, call DSN 466-2817/2836.

Travel Club

The library is hoping to start a Travel Club to share travel tips, learn about different destinations, and more. Call DSN 466-2241 for information.

Showtime

Free movies at the Community Activities Center
Tomorrow: Yes Man, 7 p.m. (PG-13)
Saturday: Bolt, 7 p.m. (PG)
Apr. 2: Doubt, 7 p.m. (PG-13)
Apr. 4: Marley and Me, 7 p.m. (PG)

Lenten Penance service

The Catholic community of Hohenfels invites you to a special Penance Service today for the season of Lent.

The service will begin at 5 p.m. in the Main Post Chapel, Bldg 2. For more, call DSN 466-2226/1570.

Local markets

Today: Local stores will be open in the historic town of Berching, 92334.

Friday-Sunday: Easter Market in the historic and beautiful city center of Furth, 90762.

Saturday-Sunday: Easter Market beginning at 10 a.m. in Vilseck, 92249, at the Ziegelanger fest site.

Sunday: Street market and open stores in Dietfurt, 92345.

Red Cross classes

Saturday: First aid from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., ACS conference room.

April 18: CPR & first aid from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., ACS conference room.

May 8: CPR & first aid from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., ACS conference room.

May 9: Babysitter’s training, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Location TBA.

Cost is \$30 for First Aid, \$35 for CPR, or \$40 for both. Additional course dates are available in Vilseck.

Ski trip prices

Let ODR do the driving and enjoy a quick winter getaway to the Bavarian Alps.

The Winklmoosalm mountain community in Reit im Winkl, Germany, offers alpine skiing, cross-country skiing, hiking in the snow and much more.

Remaining trips are scheduled for March 28, April 4 and 18.

A new, reduced price of \$20 for adults, \$15 for children and \$15 each for groups of 5 or more is now available. The cost includes transportation only.

ODR has new equipment rental available for \$15 per day for adults. For more, call DSN 466-2060.

Sunday screenings

The library will be showing Days and Clouds, an award-winning film from Italy, Sunday from 4-6 p.m.

Space is limited. Call DSN 466-1740 to reserve your place. Bring your own refreshments.

Book Club

The Hohenfels Book Club meets from 5-6 p.m on the last Monday of every month. The March book is Life of Pi by Yann Martel.

Get paid for getting fit

If you would like to get fit but are having difficulty finding time in your work schedule, the Civilian Fitness Program is made for you.

Your supervisor can approve up to three hours of excused absence a week for you to engage in a regular exercise program.

The next enrollment opportunity is March 30-31 at the Zone. Call DSN 466-3002/2831 for more.

KONTAKT Club Hohenfels

Check out your local German-American friendship organization, the KONTAKT Club in Hohenfels.

Upcoming activities include:
April 1: Bowling Night from 7-9 p.m. at Lane 17, next to the CAC.

April 11: Easter Coffee at the CYAC, Bldg. 743, beginning at 3 p.m. and will include an Easter Egg Hunt.

April 15: Monthly club Stammtisch, or regular dinner, at Josef’s Tavern in Hohenfels beginning at 7 p.m.

For more or for directions, call the Public Affairs Office at DSN 466-4294, or visit the club’s website at www.kontakt-hohenfels.com.

Brewery Tour

Bavaria is the beer capital of the world. You will have the opportunity to try all of the different types of beer available and you will also have the opportunity to try the best traditional Bavarian food in all its variety.

Bus will depart Hohenfels from the CAC, building 40, at 11 a.m. April 4 and return to Hohenfels around 10 p.m.

Cost is \$40 per person and includes transportation and brewery tours at each of the stops. Seating is limited. For more, call DSN 466-2060, CIV 09742-83-2060.

Food Handlers course

If you are working in a food booth at any event, you must attend a course on food handling.

This two-hour class will be offered in the 1-4 Battalion Classroom, Bldg. 856. The last session will be April 21 at 2 p.m. Register by calling DSN 466-4611, or DSN 466-2060.

Spring Golf Classic

All U.S. ID card holders are invited to participate in the Hohenfels Spring Golf Classic April 24 at the Hilzhofen Golf Course.

Check-in begins at 7 a.m. with a shotgun start at 8 a.m. There is a \$10 registration fee and the green fee is 20 Euro. Eighteen team slots are available with four persons each. (ABCD composition is preferred.)

Register by April 21. For information, call DSN 466-2493. Register at dlnmrhohenfelssports@eur.army.mil.

Extreme bowling

Bowl Your Brains Out with an Extreme Bowling twist every Saturday from 8-11 p.m.

Bowl as many games as you want for just \$10 for adults and \$7 for children ages 12 and under.

Bowl Your Brains Out

Bowl Your Brains Out at Lane 17 every Monday from 5-9 p.m. Bowl as many games as you want for just \$7 for adults and \$5 for children ages 12 and under. Shoe rental included.

Story hour and lapsit

Every Tuesday at 10 a.m., the library has story hour for ages 3-5 followed by lapsit stories for ages 1-3 at 9:30 a.m. and 11 a.m. For more, call DSN 466-1740.

Crafty Wednesdays

Come to the library any Wednesday from 2:30-4 p.m. to make fun crafts for all ages. Call DSN 466-1740 for more.

CYSS Kids’ Club

Parents and children can participate in gross motor play at the CYSS Annex Facility, Bldg. 44, every Thursday from 9:30-11:30 a.m.

Activities include climbing, crawling, manipulating obstacles, running, jumping and other fun events. Children must be CYSS/Kids’ Club registered. Kids’ Club is free and open to parents with infants to kindergarten-age children.

Call DSN 466-2078/2080 for more information.



USAG Grafenwoehr Religious Services Schedule

HOLY WEEK SERVICES

CATHOLIC (Grafenwoehr/Vilseck)

- HOLY THURSDAY –April 9 (6 PM) at Vilseck Main Chapel
- GOOD FRIDAY – April 10 (6 PM) at Grafenwoehr Chapel

PROTESTANT (Vilseck)

- HOLY THURSDAY –April 9 (5 PM) at Vilseck Small Chapel
- GOOD FRIDAY – April 10 (3 PM) at Vilseck Small Chapel

EASTER SERVICES

EASTER VIGIL (CATHOLIC)

- SATURDAY, April 11 (7:00 PM) at Grafenwoehr Chapel (Bldg 142)

EASTER WEEKEND

- April 11-12, regularly scheduled services for Grafenwoehr and Vilseck Chapels (with emphasis on Easter Sunday Traditions)

EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE

SUNDAY, April 12 (7:00 AM)

- Dick Heuter Lake, Grafenwoehr (on post)
- *In case of inclement weather: Grafenwoehr Chapel
- Speaker Chaplain (COL) David Hillis, USAG-GRAF Chaplain
- Continental Breakfast following the service at Grafenwoehr Chapel Annex, Bldg. 140
- POC: Chaplain Chun at 476-1570 or SFC Alam at 475-7223

2009

22 JUNE – 31 JULY

SUMMER HIRE

WHAT ARE YOU DOING THIS SUMMER?

Work in an office or outdoors with the Summer Hire Program.

Employment for family members ages 14-22

Applications accepted beginning March 30.

For more information or to apply click on the Summer Hire link at: <http://cpolrhp.belvoir.army.mil/eur/> Select “Employment” then, “Summer Hire Program 2009”.

Web site will be available effective 30 March

What’s Happening

Ansbach Briefs

Volunteers needed

The City of Ansbach and the Garrison environmental office are looking for volunteers to help clean the off-post areas around Katterbach Kaserne, Shipton Kaserne, Obereichenbach leased housing, Barton Barracks and Bleidorn Housing Saturday from 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Volunteers will meet at the theater parking lot on Bismarck Kaserne at 8 a.m. for transportation to the clean-up areas.

After cleaning, participants will enjoy a free lunch at the Distler Saal in Ansbach.

For more call DSN 467-3423, CIV 09802-83-3423.

Clinic open

To provide better service to the community, the Katterbach and Storck Barracks Health clinics will be open on the following training holidays: April 6, June 15 and Aug. 25.

AER campaign

The Ansbach Army Emergency Relief Campaign runs through May 15. For information call DSN 467-2553, CIV 09802-83-2553.

Summer hire

Summer hire applications will be accepted starting March 30. The program is open to family members aged 14-22 from June 22 to July 31.

To apply, visit <http://cpolrhp.belvoir.army.mil/eur> and select “Employment,” then “Summer Hire Program 2009.” The Web site will become available March 30.

Defensive driving

IMCOM-E offers the Army Traffic Safety Training Program Advanced Driver Course — a defensive driving course available to all community members, but required for all Soldiers under age 26.

For information, vist www.imcom-europe.army.mil/sites/management/so_atstp.asp.

The next class at Katterbach is March 30 from 4-5 p.m. in Bldg. 5818 in Room 121. The next class at Storck Barracks is April 13 from 3:30-5 p.m. in Bldg. 6516 in the area support team conference room.

No idling

Idling your vehicle is against the law in Germany and can result in a 10 Euro fine. For more call DSN 467-3423, CIV 0982-83-3423.

Free Self-Defense Class

A free Self-Defense class is scheduled as part of April’s awareness campaign to prevent sexual assault. The initial one-hour self-defense class starts April 8, from 6-7 p.m. All following classes are scheduled for 10:30-11:30 a.m., every Monday and Wednesday, at the Katterbach Gym. Sign-up by April 6.

Follow-on classes run until May 4.

For more, call DSN 467-3660, CIV 09802-83-3660.

Dinner times change

New dinner serving times are in effect at the Storck Barracks and Katterbach dining facilities. The new time is 5-6:30 p.m.

For more, call DSN 468-7919, CIV 0981-183-919.

Meet the Mids

Ansbach Middle/High School hosts “Meet the Mids” for incoming sixth graders and their parents May 28 from 5:30-7 p.m.

The event allows sixth graders to get acquainted with the school and meet upper classmen.

For more, call DSN 467-2808, CIV 09802-83-2808.

Free fitness classes

Ansbach fitness centers offer free fitness classes including Pilates, indoor cycling, muscle power and more. Certified fitness instructors offer group exercise programs at the Bunch Fitness Center at Storck Barracks and the Katterbach Fitness Center.

For information, call DSN 468-7311, CIV 0981-183-311.

Weight loss support

The Storck Barracks Yellow Ribbon Room hosts a weight loss support group Wednesdays from 6-7:30 p.m. and Fridays from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

The group is open to all community members and features weight loss topics and advice, meal ideas and healthy recipes, positive reinforcement, fitness information and more.

For more, call DSN 467-4555, CIV 09841-83-4555.

High School Musical

The award-winning Terrace Playhouse presents its production of Disney’s “High School Musical On Stage” tonight through Friday at 7:30 p.m. at the Ansbach Middle/High School.

Tickets cost \$9 for adults, \$7 for students and \$20 for a family.

For more, call DSN 468-7636, CIV 0981-183-636.

Now hiring

The Franconian Inn on Bismarck Kaserne is hiring desk clerks who can work nights and weekends. Starting pay

is \$8.44 an hour. For a full job description go to <http://cpolrhp.belvoir.army.mil/eur/index.htm> and search for announcement EUNAFHJ09012AOC1 or for the keywords desk clerk.

Applications will be accepted at the NAF civilian personnel advisory center in Room 313 of Bldg. 5254 on Barton Barracks. Call DSN 468-7822, CIV 0981-183-822 for more.

Storck Barracks alterations

The Storck Barracks Alterations Shop is open Mondays and Thursdays from 2-6 p.m. Alterations is located next to the military clothing sales store.

“On the Scene” online

Want to know what is going on within USAG Ansbach? Check out the “On the Scene” newsletter available at the garrison’s web site, www.ansbach.army.mil. The newsletter is posted every Friday.

Contact jim.k.hughes@eur.army.mil to subscribe for a PDF version by e-mail. If you would like to publicize an event, or have a story idea, call public affairs at DSN 468-1600, CIV 0981-183-1600.

Schweinfurt Briefs

Middle School break trips

Middle school students are invited to join the Teen Center day trips throughout spring break.

Take a trip to Baumholder April 3, Nuernberg Zoo April 6, or Holiday Park April 9. Register your teen at the Teen Center or call for more information at CIV 09721-96-6732.

Youth downrange crafts

Army Community Service invites youth to celebrate the Month of the Military Child by making crafts to send downrange through “Junior Heroes” at the Ledward Yellow Ribbon Room April 3, 6, 8 and 10.

Youth will have the opportunity to make dog tags or put their photo on a pillowcase.

Call for times and to sign up at CIV 09721-96-6933.

High school break trip

High school students are invited to join the Teen Center to a trip to Italy from April 6-9.

Teens will visit Florence, Pisa and Livorno. The cost is \$140. Call to register your student at CIV 09721-96-6308.

New daddy class

Are you going to be a new dad or do you have an infant already and need some tips?

Come to the Army Community Service class Daddy Basic Training at ACS April 1 from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. To sign up, call CIV 09721-96-6933.

Auto tire class

Learn everything you’ve ever wanted to know about tires at the Automotive Support Spouse Awareness Program class at the Conn Auto Skills Center April 9 at 6 p.m.

Class is open and free to all I.D. card holders. Call CIV 09721-96-8224 to sign up.

Teen babysitting training

Teens age 13 or older can have their names on the approved community teen babysitter list by completing the first aid and CPR class April 7-9 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Register before April 3 by calling Child, Youth, and School Services central registration at CIV 09721-96-6517.

Ladies’ dodge ball tourney

Finney Fitness Center invites ladies to register for the dodge ball exhibition tournament on April 9 from 6-8:30 p.m.

Registration is open April 1-8 for female I.D. card holders age 18 and older and not in high school.

Teams consist of five to eight players. For more, call CIV 09721-96-8234 or email william.comeford@eur.army.mil.

Bookmark contest

Come to the Ledward Library April 1 – 3 at 10 a.m. to make a bookmark in honor of the Month of the Military Child.

In collaboration with Schweinfurt Elementary School, bookmarks will capture the theme of safety and be put

into a contest. For more, call CIV-09721-96-1740.

Learn German

Want to learn the German language? Come to the Army Community Service class to learn beginner’s conversational German at the Ledward Yellow Ribbon room Mon, Wed, Fri from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., April 1 to April 29. To sign up, call CIV 09721-96-6933.

Love and logic parent

Army Community Service offers classes for those interested in “Becoming a Love & Logic Parent.”

The class is held Tuesdays from 9-11 a.m. at School Age Services. For information, call CIV 09721-96-6933.

Fishing in Germany

Do you want to be able to fish in Germany? Conn Outdoor Rec hosts a fishing license certification course April 3-5. Cost is \$65. For more, call CIV 09721-96-8080.

Adult book club

The community is invited to attend the adult book club at Ledward Library the last Thursday of each month.

The next meeting is tomorrow at 5:15 p.m. to discuss the book, “Zookeeper’s Wife,” by Diane Ackerman.

A copy of the book can be picked up at the library’s circulation desk. Coffee, tea and treats will be served. For more, call CIV 09721-96-6487.

Bulk trash

Bulk trash is scheduled to be picked up from Askren Manor, Yorktown Village, and government-leased housing April 7. Put bulk items out prior to 7 a.m. on day of pick-up but no earlier than the day before.

Bulk trash is only those items too large to transport in your vehicle. For more, call CIV 0162-270-9403.

Wood shop orientation

Want to learn how to make your own picture frame or chess board? Come to the Wood ‘N Frame Shop orientation Saturdays from 10-11:30 a.m. The class is required to use the wood shop for any project. Call to sign up at CIV 09721-96-6304.

Paintball thrills

The Conn Air Field is open for paintball every Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Bring your own equipment or find out about rental packages.

Group discounts are available for more than 15 people. For more information, call CIV 09721-96-8080.

Learn ceramics or pottery

Want to learn a new craft? The Ledward Crafts Studio offers mold ceramics orientation Saturdays for only \$20 including all materials needed. Pottery classes are also available from 2-4 p.m. using the potter’s wheel.

Cost is \$35 plus materials for six sessions. To sign up, call CIV 09721-96-6903.

Cosmic bowling

Enjoy an evening of cosmic bowling at the Kessler bowling alley on Saturdays from 9 p.m. to midnight.

Adult softball

Community softball needs you to join a team. Registration runs April 1-16 and is open to all I.D. card holders age 18 and up. Season begins April 21.

Weekend games travel to various installations to compete. For more, call CIV 09721-96-8234.

Deal with anger

Do you have anger that you don’t know how to properly deal with? Come to the Army Community Service series on anger management and learn how to understand the patterns of your anger and how to express it in unaggressive ways.

Classes meet every Tuesday and a new session begins April 7. Call to sign up at CIV 09721-96-6933.

Vacation communication

Army Community Service offers the class “Couples Communication through Travel” at the Education Center April 6 from 9-11 a.m.

Couples will learn how traveling opportunities can benefit relations by learning to establish goals and how to achieve them.

To register, call CIV 09721-96-6933.

ADD and ADHD support

Come speak with others living with Attention Deficit Disorder and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder on Monday 10 a.m. to noon and expand your current support network. Class is held at ACS.

For more information, call CIV 09721-96-6933.

Get tips on birth and babies


Come to Army Community Service’s two-part series Birth-n-Babies at Ledward ACS on April 8 and 10 from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.

Learn what is available for labor and delivery, how to handle complications, and what to do the first night home. For more, call CIV 09721-96-6933.

Army Traffic Safety Training Program

Advanced Driver Course (ADC)


Mandatory for Soldiers under 26 years of age



Available at a Garrison near you

Go to www.imcom-europe.army.mil/sites/management/so_atstp.asp for dates, locations and times.

Recommended 12-18 months after attending IDC training



I.A.M. STRONG

INTERVENE • ACT • MOTIVATE

Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention

INTERVENE

When I recognize a threat to my fellow Soldiers, I will have the personal courage to **INTERVENE** and prevent Sexual Assault. I will condemn acts of Sexual Harassment. I will not abide obscene gestures, language or behavior. I am a Warrior and a member of a team. I will **INTERVENE**.

ACT

You are my brother, my sister, my fellow Soldier. It is my duty to stand up for you, no matter the time or place. I will take **ACTION**. I will do what's right. I will prevent Sexual Harassment and Assault. I will not tolerate sexually offensive behavior. I will **ACT**.

MOTIVATE

We are American Soldiers, **MOTIVATED** to keep our fellow Soldiers safe. It is our mission to prevent Sexual Harassment and Assault. We will denounce sexual misconduct. As Soldiers, we are all **MOTIVATED** to take action. We are strongest...together.

www.preventsexualassault.army.mil
Military OneSource • 1-800-342-9647



Treasures of the Danube

Discover the history, sights along the river

Story and photos by
LOU STAGGER
Special to the Bavarian News

About an hour and 15 minutes south of Grafenwoehr sits Regensburg on the Danau River.

Americans know it as the Danube River. The Blue Danube Waltz may be where you heard about it as a child - it is still magical in character and charm.

Two sights to see along it are Walhalla and the Hall of Liberation.

Walhalla
Walhalla is familiar to Americans from the Nordic myths. Here in Germany, Walhalla means mortuary or place for the dead.

Walhalla is just east of Regensburg on the north side of the Danau River. (You can see it at the one o'clock position from the stop light before turning left toward IKEA).

Made of limestone in a Greek Parthenon style this monument is dedicated to the greatest German achievers.

German people have contributed greatly to the development of civilization.

King Ludwig I of Bavaria wanted to honor those great achievers and build a lasting temple to the greatness of the German mind.

He selected the sight above the Danau as the location for architect Leo von Klenze to create his vision.

As the greatest patron of the arts in his time, King Ludwig I sits center

Walhalla, built to honor Germans who made their mark on society, and The Hall of Liberation, a celebration of German victories against Napoleon, were both constructed under King Ludwig I.

stage at the far end of Walhalla on a throne of white marble with winged lions at the arm rests.

Impressive in its own right, the building inside is clad in colorful marble that simply delights the eyes.

Along the walls are busts of famous Germans interspersed with large marble angels.

If a small history lesson is important, an affordable, local trip into Greek architecture or a place to practice your photography skills, Walhalla will thrill and delight.

With a 4 Euros entry cost, it is affordable, as is the English booklet you can buy at the ticket office.

Walhalla is located at 93093 Donaustauf just east of Regensburg on the north bank of the Danau River.

Area signs easily guide you to the hill top monument.

The Hall of Liberation
The Hall of Liberation is another King Ludwig I monument.

Located at Kelheim on a bluff above the Danau River, it is just 15 minutes south west of Regensburg.

The monument was built to celebrate the German victories that moved Napoleon back across the French border and out of Germany.

This circular building has many surprises.

There is an elevator now to assist those who can't easily negotiate the many steps up to the main entry.

On approaching the

"Befreiungshalle" (the German name) you can see the massive proportions.

There are 18 granite statues atop the buttresses which are allegories of the German Tribes. The 18 are also symbolic for the crushing defeat of Napoleons army at Leipzig on 18 October 1813.

Inside there is even more symbolism.

White Carrara marble Angels stand 12-foot-tall and 34 abreast holding onto each other and massive shields made from melted French cannons.

Victories are inscribed on each shield to mark their place and date, as the campaign lasted from 1813 to 1815.

It is circular on the inside so it carries sound in remarkable ways. Echoes of any sound delight delicate ears and if you are lucky, there may be a musical ceremony.

There is a tight spiral staircase to the mezzanine where you can view the angels from above and get a closer view of the fine detail in the coffered ceiling.

Then venture onto the outside walk and view the Danube for miles and look down on Kelheim.

Views from the top are remarkable in the spring and fall.

It is another place with great opportunity to learn German history, experience the art of architecture and appreciate the natural wonders of Bavaria.

The Hall of Liberation, at Befreiungshalle Strasse 3, 93309 Kelheim, is open Nov. 1 - March 18, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and March 19 - Oct, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Visitors pay a 3 Euros entry, and at extra cost an English booklet is available at the ticket office.

More information is available about Bavaria's wide range of parks, palaces and places of interest at www.schloesser.bayern.de. Click the British flag for the English language.



The Hall of Liberation (top left), the throne of King Ludwig I (top center), and Walhalla (top right) make the Danube river a place of both beauty and history. Inside the Hall of Liberation (left and bottom), marble angels stand 12-foot-tall and hold shields made from melted French cannons. A lion (below) guards Walhalla, which means mortuary or place of the dead.



Take precautions, prevent STDs

by ANNE M. TORPHY
Bavarian MEDDAC PAO

April is sexually transmitted disease month and with the recent redeployment of troops, it is a good time to remind everyone that sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV infections, are preventable through the use of condoms when engaging in sexual activities.

What is an STD?

A STD is an infection transmitted through sexual contact. This includes vaginal intercourse, anal sex, oral sex or skin-to-skin contact.

Ejaculation does not have to occur for STDs to be transmitted or acquired. Any sexually active person can be infected with an STD.

The greater the number of sex partners, the greater the risk of infection.

If you are diagnosed with an STD and are treated for it, you should notify all of your recent sex partners so they can see a health care provider and be evaluated.

Symptoms of STDs

Most STDs don't cause any symptoms.

If you are sexually active, tell your provider and make sure to get tested at your local health clinic.

According to Isabel Tilzey, the Vilseck Health Clinic community health nurse, this includes married couples who have not been tested – Tilzey says to remember that most of these diseases have no symptoms and you may have had the STD prior to your marriage.

If you find out that you have an STD, your recent partners should be treated right away.

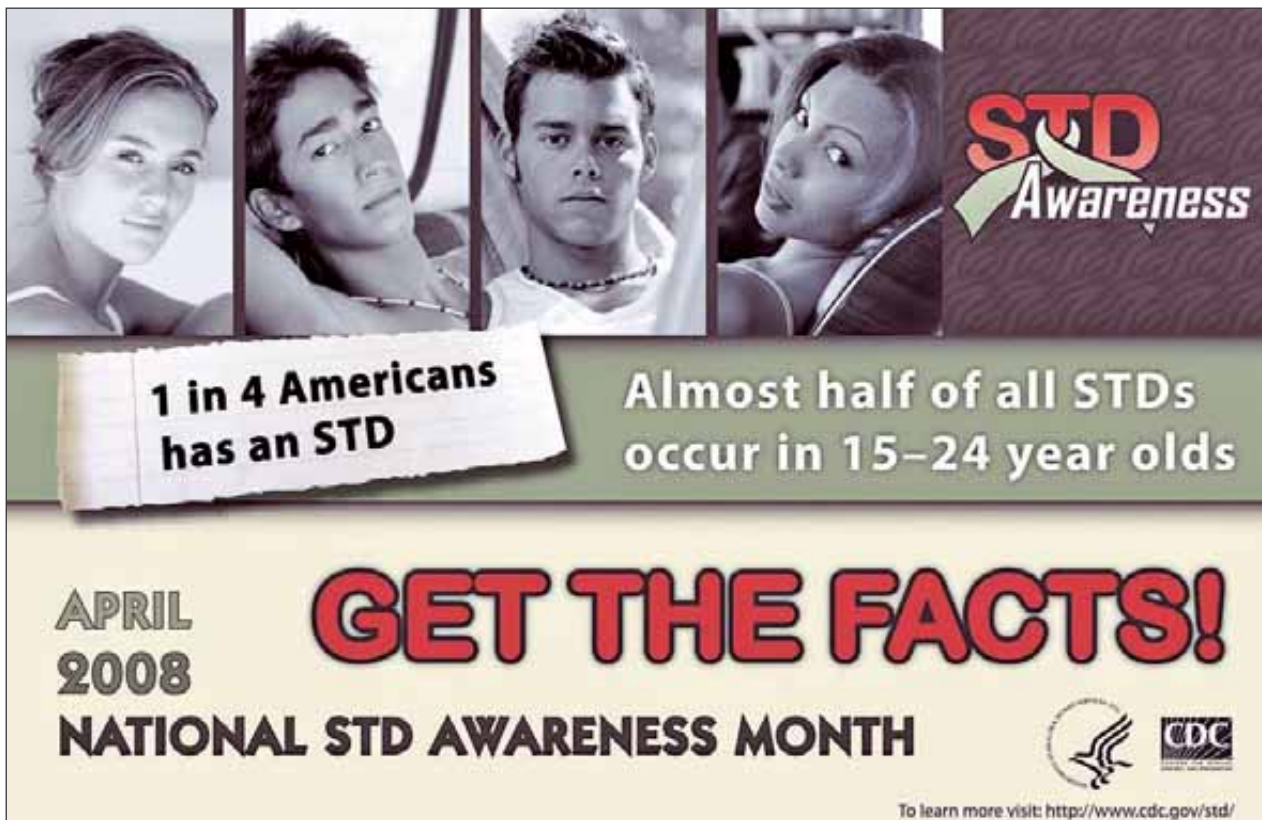
It is not advised to resume sexuality activity until your partners have completed their treatment.

The health clinic provides two options for partner notification: you can tell your partners directly or the community health nurse can do a confidential contact notification.

This means the CHN will contact your partners so that they may be tested, without identifying you.

Gone are the days of the painful swab! Tilzey says tests for chlamydia and gonorrhea are done by giving a urine sample and you should receive the results within seven days.

HIV, hepatitis and syphilis require



More information on STDs can be found at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Web site at www.cdc.gov.

a blood test and may take a few weeks to get the results. All soldiers can be tested for HIV by going to the lab and showing their ID card.

Every other test must be ordered by a provider, so make an appointment with the provider or community health nurse at the health clinic or soldiers can go to sick call. Call the clinic to follow-up if you haven't heard anything in the prescribed time.

German OB/GYN providers do an thorough well-woman exam that usually includes an ultrasound of the reproductive system, but they don't do routine testing for chlamydia or gonorrhea.

Sexually active females need to have one performed at their local health clinic through urine testing.

Can STDs be treated?

STDs like chlamydia that are caused by bacteria can be cured with antibiotics, but STDs caused by a virus (like HIV) can't be cured. Your provider can only treat the symptoms that the virus causes.

Early treatment helps prevent

serious health problems. Even if medicine can't completely cure the STD, it can help keep you from getting seriously ill.

Protection against STDs

It only takes one sexual contact with someone who has an STD to become infected.

If you are sexually active, protect yourself by using a latex condom every time you have sex, even with a long-term sexually monogamous relationship unless that person has been tested and does not have a STD.

But know that condoms can't prevent you from coming into contact with some sores, such as those that can occur with herpes, syphilis or genital warts. Check with your doctor about immunizations that are available for STD prevention.

Sex Workers

According to Dr. (Capt.) Sarah Niles, BMEDDAC Chief of Preventive Medicine, due to the nature of their work and the frequency of contact with multiple partners, having sex with a

sex worker is dangerous and carries a great risk of contracting a disease, possibly HIV.

Niles says there is a higher rate of HIV from sex workers who have come into Germany from the Czech Republic and that sex workers in Germany are not tested for chlamydia or gonorrhea.

Capt. Howard C. Sun, administrative law attorney in Vilseck, says it is illegal for soldiers to pay prostitutes under Article 134 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice which states that illegal activities include "pandering by compelling, inducing, enticing, or procuring act of prostitution."

Male Condoms

Your local health clinic pharmacy carries male condoms for free! Maj. Michael Ronn, Chief of Pharmacy for Bavaria MEDDAC, says to follow the normal routine for your pharmacy when picking up prescriptions or self-care items.

When you are helped at the window, you can request as many condoms as you'd like within reason (around a

dozen). All beneficiaries are eligible to ask, but pay patients may get charged for them.

Correct male condom use should include the following steps:

- Use a new condom for each act of intercourse
- Make sure the condom fits properly, and put on as soon as erection occurs and before any sexual contact (vaginal, anal, or oral)
- Hold the male condom tip and unroll it onto the erect penis, leaving space at the tip of the condom and make sure that no air is trapped in the tip
- Use only water-based lubricants, such as glycerine or lubricating jellies. Oil-based lubricants, such as petroleum jelly, cold cream, hand lotion, or baby oil, can weaken the condom and cause it to break
- Withdraw from your partner immediately after ejaculation, holding the condom firmly to keep it from slipping off

Female condom

Capt. Catharina Lindsey, Grafenwoehr Health Clinic's public health nurse, said she is a big proponent of the female condom.

According to Lindsey, the female condom is a plastic polyurethane pouch and has flexible rings at each end.

Just like male condoms, it is used during intercourse to prevent pregnancy and reduce the risk of sexually transmitted diseases. Just before vaginal intercourse, it is inserted deep into the vagina.

The ring at the closed end holds the pouch in the vagina. The ring at the open end stays outside the vaginal opening during intercourse. During anal intercourse, it is inserted into the anus.

Some nice advantages of the female condom: it can be used by people who are allergic to latex and will stay in place whether or not a man maintains his erection.

Also, unlike male condoms, you can use the oil or water-based lubricants and the ring may enhance sex play — the external ring may stimulate the clitoris during vaginal intercourse and you do not need to withdraw immediately after ejaculation.

Lindsey says you can order the female condom by conducting a search and ordering online.

Military looks to dispel myths, advance treatment for mTBI

by MARK HEETER
Schweinfurt CI Chief

Get a good nights sleep.

That is a seemingly simple, yet sometimes complicated, goal and advice from medical professionals as part of a reintegration program for redeploying Soldiers who might have suffered traumatic brain injuries, according to Brig. Gen. Keith Gallagher, commander of Europe Regional Medical Command.

"When you come back from Afghanistan or Iraq, part of the screening program process is (confirming) if you had multiple concussive injuries downrange," Gallagher said.

The objective of the reintegration is to "get you to where you can function and go to sleep at night," he said. "Sleep is very important for the healing process."

And, contrary to popular misconceptions, these physical injuries will heal, according to Dr. (Brig. Gen.) Loree Sutton, special assistant to the Assistant Secretary

of Defense (Health Affairs) for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).

"One of the myths out there is that mild traumatic brain injuries, or concussions, means that somehow your brain is broken forever. No, it's an injury," said Sutton, who is also director of the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury.

"If you have some long term, later symptoms that pop up, that's probably post-traumatic stress. That's probably not related to the concussion," she said.

Sutton and Gallagher were joined for a recent meeting and video teleconference at the Schweinfurt Army Health Clinic by Dr. (Brig. Gen.) Rhonda Cornum, director of comprehensive soldier fitness, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff (G-3/5/7), Department of the Army.

"We need to address (brain injury and psychological health) in a holistic fashion," said Cornum, who aims to see

more components of Soldiers' total health come into focus, through prevention and training,

across the Army culture.

"(Recruits) come in, and we do the (physical training) test twice a year. We do PT training every week. And so we have a program to make people stronger, but we have not had a program to worry about psychological, spiritual, emotional, family," she said.

"The Department (of Defense) has made an enormous investment in both better understanding concussions, mild TBI, and in psychological health," said Sutton, who admitted that doctors' and researchers' recent discoveries about the brain make this an "exciting" time to be working on injured servicemembers' behalf.

"When I was in medical school, in the 80s, we were taught what was then thought to be true, you know, you're born into this world with all the brain cells you're ever going to get," Sutton said, quickly dispelling those old misconceptions with words like neurogenesis and neuroplasticity that define the brain's ability to recover and adapt.

Soldiers - or anyone - who have likely suffered a TBI should seek help with their care providers, stressed Gallagher.

"If they're having problems, they can go see their primary care provider. If they're still having problems, go see them again," he said.

"But don't stay awake, watching movies, because you can't go to sleep, and then wonder why you're getting up late for work. That's not helpful," Cornum quickly added.

It's not just about that good night's sleep.

For more information on mTBIs, search the Europe Regional Medical Command's archives at <http://ermc.amedd.army.mil/>.

Behavioral health clinic opens in Grafenwoehr

by ANNE M. TORPHY
Bavarian MEDDAC PAO

A behavioral health clinic opened in Grafenwoehr this month to provide services for active duty Soldiers, Family Members, civilians and retirees through individual therapy, group therapy, couples communication, family therapy and counseling workshops.

"Our services can help you manage the challenges associated with the deployment cycle. Issues can include, but are not limited to, PTSD, mTBI, marital counseling, anger management and suicide prevention," said Lt. Col. Telita Crosland, commander of the Grafenwoehr Health Clinic and also responsible for the new behavioral health clinic.

Crosland said that other services include managing alcohol, drug and gambling related issues, teen counseling, grief counseling, sexual assault counseling and anxiety issues.

The gray building is located behind the health clinic, across from the helicopter pad.

To make an appointment, call DSN 475-7152/8393, CIV 09641-83-7152/8393.

For after-hours mental health emergencies, please call the MP desk at DSN 476-2490, CIV 09662-8969.

Clinic hours are Mon. through Thurs., 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; Fri., 7:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.; and training holidays, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

“One of the myths out there is that mild traumatic brain injuries, or concussions, means that somehow your brain is broken forever. No, it’s an injury.”

Dr. (Brig. Gen.) Loree Sutton
Director of the Defense Centers
of Excellence for Psychological
Health and Traumatic Brain Injury

172nd hosts first Blackhawk Warrior Leader Course in Iraq

by 1st Lt. LONNIE M. COLBERT
172nd Infantry Brigade

Team leaders from all units within the 172nd Infantry Brigade trained together March 2-6 at Forward Operating Base Kalsu for the first ever Blackhawk Warrior Leader Course.

Instituted by 172nd Brigade Command Sgt. Maj. Steven W. McClafin, the course reinforces combat theater operational understanding for junior noncommissioned officers.

Civil capacity, force protection and Iraqi security professionalization were just a few of the more than 20 subjects instituted into training.

"We are training team leaders to be subject matter experts at the squad level," explained Sgt. Maj. Steven Spillman, course commandant and operations sergeant major for 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment. "This is team leader professionalization."

"Our focus is to train the team leader that is consistently out on patrol," added Spillman.

"We want to reinforce their understanding of basic warrior tasks and skills, such as casualty evacuation procedures, lifesaving, load plans, vehicle recovery drills, asset integration and improvised explosive device tactics, techniques and procedures."

Team leaders can take these skills back to their units and conduct training at the team level.

Students trained on several subjects that are integral to Iraqi Security Forces.

Subjects such as the Iraqi rank structure, military and police culture gave the Soldiers more insight into

how the ISF operates.

"We wanted the students to learn more about the Iraqi way of doing things, so they could better train them," said McClafin.

"Iraqi warrants and detainee operations classes were taught as well, so that our Soldiers would be knowledgeable of the system we now work under," added McClafin.

The Babil and Karbala provincial reconstruction teams are very involved in the efforts ongoing in the Blackhawk area of operations.

Warrior leaders received instruction on the PRT, so that brigade Soldiers would know how better to support them.

"I have plans to take all the things I learned back to my unit and implement them," stated Sgt. Jeanette Hemphill, 172nd Support Battalion team leader.

Hemphill was the only female to complete the course. "I was setting the standard for the other females coming behind me," Hemphill added.

A closely tailored physical training and nutrition plan provided situational awareness to educate Soldiers on proper dietary techniques.

The 22 Soldiers attending the course faced strenuous physical training daily and received meals customized to decrease their calorie and carbohydrate intake.

Although the Blackhawk Warrior Leader Course is not an accredited official Army course, students earned 60 hours worth of promotions points.

Promotion points are essential to all enlisted Soldiers below the rank of sergeant first class to allow merit recognition for excellence in areas



Photo by Pfc. Bethany L. Little

A bonfire lit the sky of Babil Province, as non-commissioned officers from across the 172nd Infantry Brigade welcomed 22 graduates into the ranks of leadership at the first ever Blackhawk Warrior Leader Course in theater.

such as self-development, schools and physical fitness.

A graduation ceremony culminated all training for the Blackhawk Warrior Leader Course.

Noncommissioned officers from all units within the brigade welcomed the graduates into the ranks of leadership as a bonfire lit the skies above

the Blackhawk Brigade.

Guest speaker at the graduation, Division Command Sgt. Maj. James S. Redmore, highlighted the importance and responsibilities of team leaders and noncommissioned officers alike.

"You are measured by everything you do. You must inspire subordinates

to do things they normally would not do," Redmore said.

"An NCO must train to be physically and mentally tough, train to have the spirit and will to fight," emphasized Redmore.

"You must have a drive for excellence and ambition and instill dignity and honor in everything you do."

Deployed Soldiers become U.S. citizens

Story and photo by
Pfc. BETHANY L. LITTLE
172nd Infantry Brigade

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America," were the words echoing through Al-Faw Palace at Camp Victory, Iraq, as 250 service members recited the Oath of Allegiance during a naturalization ceremony, March 3.

Of those 250 service members, five Soldiers serve with 1st Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 172nd Infantry Brigade. Spc. Benedict Balagtas, a cook from the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Sgt. Quoc Ngyuen, a mortar man, with HHC Spc. Oziel Contreras, an infantryman with B Company, Spc. Jose Franco, a M2/3 Bradley Fighting Vehicle System Maintainer for A Company and Pfc. Solomon Amede, an infantryman for C Company,

became U.S. Citizens during the ceremony.

"I've waited a long time to become a citizen," said Balagtas.

After one unsuccessful attempt to apply for his citizenship in 2006, Balagtas applied a second time underneath a new unit, the 172nd Inf. Bde.

"The process of obtaining my citizenship was a lot easier with the support of my unit," said Balagtas, originally from the Philippines but refers to Los Angeles, Calif., as home.

"Becoming a U.S. Citizen is really important to me," said Contreras, originally from Mexico, but he calls Dallas, Texas, home. "I can vote for a lot of things that will affect my future."

"I plan on living in the U.S. after I'm done with the military," said Ngyuen, a native of Yigo, Guam. "However, if I had not had such an easy time getting my citizenship, it may have been harder for me to accomplish my goal."

"Soldiers and service members don't realize how easy it can be to obtain their citizenship," said Staff Sgt. Clifford Gabriel, the battalion retention non-commissioned officer.

"Before 2004, Soldiers had to wait three years to apply for citizenship, now they can apply within one day of service during hostilities."

Service members should submit applications and military packets through their command representative or U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services department to begin the process of getting citizenship.

The remaining steps require service members to get photographs taken, fingerprints recorded, collect any necessary paperwork and mail everything to CIS.

After completing the paperwork, service members wait to receive a date for a scheduled interview.

The interview tests applicants on their ability to read, write and speak English.

During the interview, the service members take a civics test to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of U.S. history and government.

"All the hard work and late night studying paid off, especially with the civics test," said Ngyuen.

"I think I know more history about the U.S. than most citizens," laughed Ngyuen as he and

fellow Soldiers reminisced about the process they went through to become U.S. Citizens.

When the applicants are finished with the interview, they wait for CIS to decide if they are "granted" citizenship.

If granted, service members attend a ceremony to take the Oath of Allegiance and receive a Certificate of Naturalization.

"These Soldiers and service members here today are demonstrating their dedication to become an American citizen," said Lt. Col. Steven Miska, 1st Bn. 2nd Inf. Regt. Commander.

The five Soldiers of 1st Bn. 2nd Inf. Regt., not only became U.S. citizens, but were able to witness a special re-enlistment ceremony shortly after the naturalization ceremony.

With the U.S. flag proudly hanging from the third story of the palace, Miska conducted the ceremony to re-enlist Balagtas for an additional five

I cannot say it enough; it is truly a great feeling to know that we have Soldiers and service members who serve selflessly. This is a very special day for these guys ... I'm proud to be here to support them.

Lt. Col. Steven Miska
1st Bn., 2nd Inf. Regt. Commander

years of service.

"Today is a great day for me," said Balagtas "I re-enlisted on the same day I received my citizenship in honor of my family, and of my country."

"I cannot say it enough; it is truly a great feeling to know that we have Soldiers and service members who serve selflessly," said Miska. "This is a very special day for these guys and I'm proud to be here to support them."

Service members raise their right hand while they say the oath of allegiance officially making them U.S. citizens during a naturalization ceremony at the Al-Faw Palace March 3.



The Bavarian News would like to spotlight all deployed units! Unit PAOs, if you are planning to deploy or currently in theatre, send contact information to mary.markos@eur.army.mil, or call DSN 314-475-7113.

Library gives kids head start on reading

Story and photo by
RONALD H. TOLAND JR.
Bavarian News

The community library offers more than just books and one program can open up worlds for community children.

Story time for youngsters, preschool and school age children alike, available at both Storck Barracks and Bleidorn libraries, offers more than just entertainment for an hour.

"Children who read for pleasure do better at school and story-time is just the first rung of that 'reading-on-your-own ladder'," said Eric McCarthy, community librarian assistant.

But the session also involves more than reading time.

"Every Monday at the Bleidorn Library, we read a couple of stories and do a craft," said McCarthy. "We run the gamut here from toddlers to 3- and 4-year-olds who are starting to get it - those that want to hear stories."

Sessions usually run about an hour, but may be longer at Storck because "school-age children may read six or seven stories and then do the craft afterward," he said, adding that the craft tries to tie into something that was read.

McCarthy emphasized an important note for parents about story hour, however.

"All children under 10 have to be accompanied by a parent while in the library - direct supervision," said McCarthy.

He explained the purpose of this and of community libraries - interaction and involvement.

"Parents are present, helping with



Eric McCarthy, community librarian assistant, reads a book to children at the Bleidorn library during story hour. "Every Monday at the Bleidorn Library, we read a couple of stories and do a craft--we run the gamut here from toddlers to 3 and 4-year-olds that want to hear stories," said McCarthy.

the craft, with stories - both the preschool and school-age sessions," said McCarthy.

Even more, he said parental involvement is stressed with the sessions. Parents bring snacks and contribute to the craft and to discussions with the older children.

"I even encourage and welcome the parents to come and read if they want to. Ideally it is best if the parents are part of it, but I'm not putting them to work," said McCarthy while laughing.

He stated that reading with children early is the key to learning.

"We want to encourage life-long readers," he said. "The earlier you start that, and continue it, the better for the children."

"Libraries are about literacy. Libraries are about learning. Libraries are about being a place where the community can come enjoy the space,

enjoy the books and story-time is a natural fit," said McCarthy.

Overall, he said libraries are essential community centers.

"All programming in the library is important for all ages - for teens, for adults, for children," he said. "Libraries are a crucial part of the community. Libraries have homework resources, technology and research, all under one roof where adults, children and teens can benefit from what we offer."

"We want the community to use our facility. This program is just one way for our customers to use it," he added. "If we offer something in addition to what we already have under the roof, then that increases the value of the facility to our patrons."

The library staff plans on incorporating other events this year. McCarthy mentioned the monthly book club for adults at both Bleidorn and Storck libraries and added that more programming is on the way.

"The summer reading program is our biggest program of the year," he said. "We have two or three events planned a week, including where the kids actually make a magazine. I want to have a magazine release party where the kids will read from it to parents, community members and VIPs. I want everyone to know what hard work these kids did. It's going to be big," McCarthy said.

For complete details and information on story time and the other children's programs the community libraries offer, call Storck Barracks Library at DSN 467-4675, CIV 09841-83-4675, or the Bleidorn Library at DSN 468-1740, CIV 0981-183-1740.

Recycling stations earns dental commander recognition, cash

Story and photo by
RONALD H. TOLAND JR.
Bavarian News

The commander of the Katterbach Dental Clinic earned third place in the worldwide Family, Morale, Welfare and Recreation arts and crafts contest - and made a statement for recycling while he was at it.

Col. Michael Hemker, who received a \$100 cash prize, earned recognition for his entry in the novice division wood category for a piece he calls, "Recycle Station Cabinet."

"I saw in a magazine once how to make a cabinet - basically a trashcan receptacle, but it looked like a little bar or server type thing," said Hemker. "So I made that first."

But, he explained, there was not enough room for it when moving to Germany.

"My wife gave the first one away before we moved here," he said. "So I made a new one from my own plans that looked a little nicer and added the top part for the other recyclables."

He explained that the cabinet was fun to

design and build, but he made it for more than just the joy of construction.

"There was a need," said Hemker. "There was not enough recycling being done in the family - it came out of a need. It's basically a larger recycling center cabinet and it was also an anniversary gift for my wife. It serves a purpose. Besides, my wife loves it and makes the kitchen look nice."

"Recycling is important to make the world a better place for future generations and to save energy," he said.

Whether recycling trash or wood, Hemker said for him, wood crafting came many years before carving out cavities and teeth.

"We had a woodshop in our school," said Hemker. "That is where I learned wood crafting - in woodshop at junior high. It's been something I have always fiddled with ever since."

Hemker said that he and his wife have been attending wood craft shows for about 20 years and if he did not want to buy something there, he'd make it himself.

"A small shelf may go for \$45 and I could

make it for \$10," said the commander.

The dentist said there is not enough going on in the craft shop at Ansbach and he intends to donate his winnings back into the facility.

"I think the award is great to help advertise the woodshop," said Hemker. "It is something that a lot more people could be using here."

He would like to divvy up winnings in both time and resources.

"Something like \$60 for materials and \$40 for 10 hours of free shop time whatever they want to do with it that will encourage use."

The U.S. Army Family Morale Welfare and Recreation Arts and Crafts Contest is an annual event recognizing the talent and creativity of Soldiers, Army civilians and their family members worldwide.

Col. Michael Hemker with his wood crafting creation that won him third place in the worldwide Army Family, Morale, Welfare and Recreation arts and crafts contest.



GARRISON SNAPSHOTS

Junior Paul Farinosi is crowned "Miss Ansbach" by Senior Donovan Purdumm - Miss Ansbach 2008 and MC for the 2009 pageant - at the 2nd Annual Miss Ansbach Competition Feb. 26, at the Ansbach Middle High School. The competition is a comedic beauty pageant where each contestant competes in four events - formal, talent, swimsuit, and speech. The event was sponsored by AMHS Junior class and proceeds went to the class for the upcoming junior/senior prom.

Photo by Ronald H. Toland Jr.



Photo by Ronald H. Toland Jr.

Along with principal Essie Grant and reading specialist Hellen O'Donnell, students from Millie Cordoba's first grade class get some help from the Cat in the Hat while signing the "I pledge to Read Every Day," banner at Ansbach Elementary School's library. This kicked off Read Across America week in March.

Reading strengthens parent, child bond, academic success

by SANDRA WILSON
Bavarian News

“It takes hundreds of hours of lap time for a child to gain the pre-literacy skills necessary to learn to read early and well,” said the National Children’s Reading Foundation Web site about the need for parents to read to their children.

But don’t let the number of hours be intimidating because those necessary reading skills can be attained through reading aloud to children for just 20 minutes a day, said the site.

National Read Across America Week was celebrated the first week of March at Schweinfurt schools with reading activities, games and observing Dr. Seuss’ birthday March 2.

Throughout the celebration, teachers, staff, and administrators hoped to emphasize the importance of reading in all arenas of students’ lives.

“Like other skills, reading is mastered over time, with lots of practice and with the help of another person,” said the reading foundation Web site.

And one of the primary helps comes from the child’s parents.

“I can remember sitting on my dad’s lap on Sunday mornings ... and him reading the comics to me,” said Sara Maka, READ 180 teacher at Schweinfurt Middle School.

“Children learn how to talk by hearing talk, and they learn how to read by hearing reading,” said LaVonne Ector, part-time reading recovery and part-time literacy coach at Schweinfurt Elementary School.

“Children learn more in the first five or six years than they are going to for the rest of their lives,” she said.

Even once a child begins to read themselves, it is still important to read aloud together, she continued.

“Even middle-schoolers ... they enjoy it when we read to them,” Maka said, describing the times she has read aloud to her class.

Adults reading to children encourages them to read even when someone is not available to do it with them.

Children are more likely to grow a love of books and reading in general when it’s done together on a regular basis.

“Even when I taught first-grade, the kids who were read to as pre-schoolers were more apt to pick up reading and look at books more often than someone who never had someone read to them or take them to the library,” said Darlene



Photo by Emily Athens

Omar Torres (left), a seventh-grader at Schweinfurt Middle School, reads to Angel Costilla (from right), Claire Flynn, and Brianna Kloeckl for Read Across America week.

Edgar, reading/literacy teacher at SMS.

Reading is not just for the sake of reading, either. It’s the foundation for everything else in life, they said.

“You can’t do math if you can’t read. You can’t get a job if you can’t read the application,” Edgar said.

“If they have trouble reading in school, they are going to have trouble in all their subjects. Reading really is the most important thing,” Ector said.

“Good readers are usually good writers,” said Darlene Spencer, language arts teacher at SMS.

Not only is reading aloud vital, but having books around the house for the skill level of your children is important. If a page has more than a couple words that are unknown to the child, frustration may set in.

“When I needed to go to the library, they took me,” Spencer said about her parents when she

was a child. “I can remember piles of children’s books when I was 5.”

Frequent visits to the library and bedtime stories are only a few of the possible ways for parents to approach reading.

Parents can make lists of chores for their kids to check off or a calendar of events for them to follow. Families can read recipes and cook together or kids can be sent on a scavenger hunt with written clues.

There is no limit to creative ways of incorporating reading into the lives of children. Not only do these activities promote reading, they also lend to family bonding and encourage listening skills.

“Focus on them when they’re little. If you give them a good start when they’re younger, they’re not going to have problems when they’re older,” Ector said.

“The most important thing you can do to help your child to be a success is to read to them.”

Tips to Improve Reading Success

Reading books aloud is one of the best ways you can help your child learn to read.

This can be fun for you, too. The more excitement you show when you read a book, the more your child will enjoy it.

The most important thing to remember is to let your child set her own pace and have fun at whatever she is doing. Do the following when reading to your child:

- Run your finger under the words as you read to show your child that the print carries the story.
- Use funny voices and animal noises. Do not be afraid to ham it up! This will help your child get excited about the story.
- Stop to look at the pictures; ask your child to name things she sees in the pictures. Talk about how the pictures relate to the story.
- Invite your child to join in whenever there is a repeated phrase in the text.
- Show your child how events in the book are similar to events in your child's life.
- If your child asks a question, stop and answer it. The book may help your child express her thoughts and solve her own problems.
- Keep reading to your child even after she learns to read. A child can listen and understand more difficult stories than she can read on her own.

For more information on what you can do to help your learn to read visit the American Academy of Pediatrics Web site at <http://www.aap.org/healthtopics/literacy.cfm>.

Digital art contest teaches life lessons, responsibility

Story and photo by
MARK HEETER
Schweinfurt CI Chief

The back wall of the School Age Services gymnasium came to life the evening of March 3, covered with photographs and digital art in the Boys and Girls Clubs of America Imagemakers competition.

“Since we have the partnership with (BGCA), it’s one of the things they asked us to do,” said Helen Corriea, the SAS computer lab technician who guided the children through the project, beginning in September 2008.

“These kids started not even

knowing how to put batteries in a camera, not knowing how to take the chip out of the camera,” she said.

“This is all their work,” she said, gesturing to the 88 pieces of art hanging behind her in the gym.

The children, whose work was displayed in three categories according to their age group, took full control of their work, to include printing, matting and mounting.

Twenty-three children from SAS and five from the Teen Center offered their photographs for judging; additionally, 12 teens also displayed their work in the non-judged digital arts category.



SAS staff member Betty Riggins and Clajanique Thanes, 10, enjoy the digital artwork at the Imagemakers contest.

“It’s amazing to see your children pick these things up as quickly as they do,” said SAS employee Betty Riggins, while admiring the children’s artwork and photographs. “They do some marvelous work,” she said.

While Corriea wanted the children to learn lessons about respect and responsibility through the project, she made them aware of her most important rule.

“They know that my number one rule is I want them to have fun. That’s very important,” she said.

The six-month project also offered the children a couple other important lessons, according to Bobbie Jones, SAS director.

“One of the big things is patience. They didn’t do this in a day or a week. This shows them that things do take time to get quality,” Jones said.

“And another thing is everybody isn’t always considered the best, but you can still be recognized for what you do. And I think that’s important for them to see – that all of their art work is important,” she said.

Whether winners, runners-up or great photographers, the children seem to have gotten the point.

“I had fun learning to take pictures with all of my friends,” said 8-year-old Steven Fontelle.

First place was awarded to the following youth in their age categories: Santrice Johnson, ages 13 to 15; Marissa Ixlahuac, ages 10 to 12; and Joaquin Quilling, ages 9 and younger.

Cooking up fun



Photo by Sandra Wilson

Fourth-graders Mia Johnson-Gonzales, left, and Benjamin Finch add ingredients to the chicken noodle soup for the after-school Schweinfurt Elementary School cooking club. The club meets for six weeks with 17 fifth-graders on Thursday and 17 fourth-graders on Friday.

“It’s become very popular, so sometimes the teachers have to do a drawing of some sort,” said teacher Stephanie Ferch, explaining how the 17 participants are chosen for the six-week club.

Students learn how to make a new meal each week. Ferch and teacher Beth Myers discuss nutrition, how to properly handle and prepare food, and cleaning up afterwards. The meals are enjoyed at the end of each session by the hands that prepared it.

“Champions of Change” conquer, prioritize issues at AFAP conference

by **EMILY ATHENS**
Bavarian News

The three-day Schweinfurt Army Family Action Plan conference Feb. 24-26 marked yet another successful year of collaborative efforts to improve the Army way of life.

Fifty-nine issues were addressed resulting in six prioritized concerns that were analyzed and given possible solutions by the participating delegates.

“(AFAP) is really important in our community because it makes changes within the community. We’re able to hear what the community has to say, and take it and actually put it into effect.

“We feel like we are actually making a difference ... people are being heard,” said Regina Moore, 15th Engineer Battalion Family Readiness Support Technician who participated as a delegate in last week’s conference.

According to Katy McClelland, AFAP coordinator, these delegates, ranging from family members to Soldiers of all ranks, served a vital role in the productivity of the conference.

“The theme this year was ‘Champions of Change’ because our delegates are really the champions of change within our community,” McClelland said, “All the groups were really good, hardworking groups.”

Three groups of delegates, branded the Avengers, the Transformers, and the Power Rangers, worked on issues pertaining to housing,



Photo by Mark Heeter

Jane White (left) and Joye Klein, who assisted with the AFAP conference, refer to past issue documentation to help clarify an issue.

medical, dental, the consumer, entitlements, force support, and family support.

A broad range of issues were submitted

by community members with a heavy focus on family-oriented concerns, McClelland explained.

“Anything from where dogs go to the bathroom, to R&R, to sponsorship training was addressed,” McClelland said, noting that the rest and recuperation leave and sponsorship training submissions were two of the six prioritized issues.

To be more specific, delegates addressed the online sponsorship gateway, referred to as S-GATE, and made recommendations that satisfy the program’s goal of providing every inbound Soldier with a sponsor.

Furthermore, the issue of leave being charged for Soldiers taking R&R was addressed and given the recommendation of allotting the Soldiers those days as a reward for their combat service.

These along with the other four prioritized issues will be reviewed by Lt. Col. Anthony Haager, garrison commander, and then possibly sent up to Installation Management Command Europe.

“Any issues that we cannot handle here will get sent to IMCOM-E for the June conference in Heidelberg,” McClelland said, emphasizing that Haager will take the time to read through each issue and make decisions on what can be fixed, what can’t be fixed, and delegate out to the agencies that can handle it.

“I really feel like this is real important in our community because when you have an issue, you can actually turn it into progressiveness and move forward with it,” Moore said.

Soldiers gain mission readiness, improve Area Mike through environmental project

by **EMILY ATHENS**
Bavarian News

In an effort to better the training area dubbed Area Mike, the Department of Public Works partnered with the 500th Engineer Horizontal Company of the 15th Engineer Battalion, who arrived to Schweinfurt within the past year.

This partnership has provided the Soldiers with invaluable training supporting their mission readiness.

“This is a coordination between the troops and DPW, and a coordination between the U.S. Army and the host nation. It’s an overall stewardship supporting the environment and training,” said Lothar Rueckert, chief of the environmental division at DPW.

While making area improvements, the troops assisted in relocating

This is a coordination between the troops and DPW, and a coordination between the U.S. Army and the host nation. It’s an overall stewardship supporting the environment and training.

Lothar Rueckert, DPW Environmental Division Chief

biotopes, or habitats, occupied by a species of frogs that could potentially be disturbed.

This type of labor is not only supporting their training, but maintaining the environment, explained Rueckert.

“The technique we use to dig the biotopes for frogs is the same we use to build tank ditches ... for vehicles. Just because we are not digging specifically to our mission does not mean we are not getting any training value and

honing our skills from this project,” said Lt. Brent Johnson, a platoon leader for the battalion.

The experience not only tested the skills of the company, but it built individual capabilities that can be translated to missions within a combat environment.

“It’s inevitable that we’re going to deploy, so our job as leaders is to make sure our guys get trained,” said Capt. Randy Simon, company commander.

During the four-week project,

Soldiers advanced reconnaissance skills, enhanced tactical abilities, and increased technical knowledge, focusing on sustainable military occupational specialty skills for engineers.

“I would rather know my guys are trained, so we’re prepared when it’s go time,” added 1st Sgt. Steven Kelly, “We don’t care if the work demands only a four-Soldier squad ... we don’t care if it’s the whole company. We just want to do the work. It’s always

about training.”

In the midst of the training, Soldiers encountered various challenges but none hindered the productivity.

According to Simon, the entire process created a professional exercise for his troops as they worked through environmental, logistical, and everyday issues. “The biggest thing with earth-moving is that you’re always fighting the weather,” Johnson said.

Despite the project’s demands, the Soldiers of the horizontal construction company enjoyed the labor.

“The morale overall has skyrocketed just because they get to go out there and do what they went into the Army to do. Any Army Soldier would rather be out in the field doing their job, so it’s been a really positive month,” Johnson said.

Museum visit opens door to international partnership

Story and photo by
SANDRA WILSON
Bavarian News



Hammelburg infantry school sniper instructor, Master Sgt. Maurice Orben (right) speaks about the school’s museum to visiting American Soldiers March 2.

Nearly 25 U.S. Army Garrison Schweinfurt Soldiers and civilians visited the Hammelburg Infantry School March 2 to tour the history museum there.

The group was welcomed onto the German installation and into the museum, before sharing a meal at the officers’ club and meeting the deputy commander of the school.

“It’s a change of pace to visit the museum. Plus it gives them a chance to interact with the German soldiers,” said Michael Cormier, partnership officer for the 172nd Infantry Brigade (Separate).

Most of the visiting Soldiers were part of the Warrior Transition Unit (WTU) in Schweinfurt.

“On a daily basis, they’re going to a lot of appointments. This isn’t something we normally do,” said Sgt. 1st Class Scott Isom, Company C, Warrior Transition Battalion, explaining it is good to get them off of their routine on occasion.

The infantry school sniper instructor, Master Sgt. Maurice Orben, began the two-hour museum

tour with comments about the importance of learning history.

“We have to know the past to set the future,” he said.

Orben guided them around the museum, speaking and answering questions in English, and pointed out significant uniforms, weapons, and flags in the display cases.

He revisited battle stories from the 30 Years’ War in the 1600s, as well as World Wars I and II.

The visit was intended to continue building the partnership between the infantry school and American Soldiers, but it also served to start a new friendship, specifically with the WTU.

“This is the first time the WTU has done something with a foreign military,” said Greg Miller, Soldier and Family Assistance Center specialist at USAG Schweinfurt.

“The WTU is a point of great interest to our allies. They are struggling to deal with their own wounded soldiers.

“Maybe they can get some ideas about how they can help their own wounded soldiers when they come back,” said Maj. Nathan Hurt, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command liaison officer.

TAP OUT

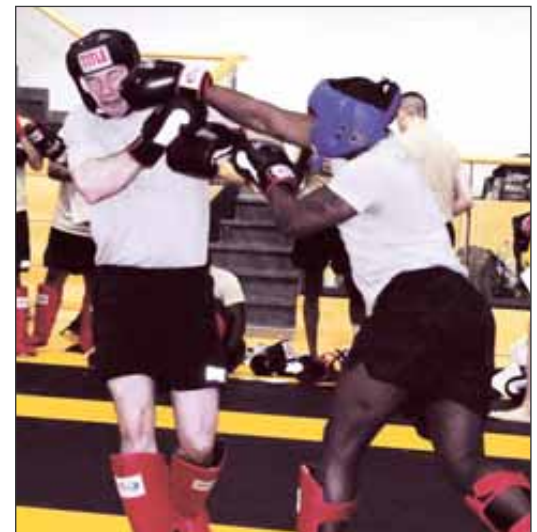


Above, Spc. Jorge Giovannini, U.S. Army Combatives School instructor, reviews safety precautions with students of the Level III Combatives Course as they prepare for bouts March 12 at the Grafenwoehr Physical Fitness Center.

Modern Army Combatives blends Brazilian jujitsu, wrestling, judo and boxing into a systematic form of hand-to-hand combat.

Thirty students from installations across Germany and Italy attended the course, which was a first for Europe.

Upon graduation, students will return to their units to train and certify Soldiers in the Level I Combatives Course.



Soldiers build the Warrior Ethos one blow at a time

Story and photos by
MARY MARKOS
Editor

Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee.

Students of the U.S. Army Level III Combatives Course hoped to do just that as they punched, kicked and fought their way to certification – and the sting was more than an expression,

it was a 1,000 watt jolt of electricity from a taser.

From boxing to stick fighting, the 30 students from installations throughout Germany and Italy overcame fear and physical exhaustion to gain the upper hand and close in on the enemy, the defining characteristic of a warrior.

Modern Army Combatives, the military's unique martial-art which blends Brazilian jujitsu, wrestling,

judo and boxing into a systematic form of hand-to-hand combat, according to both instructors and students, gives Soldiers the confidence to live the Warrior Ethos and survive in combat.

Instructors from the U.S. Army Combatives School in Ft. Benning, Ga., traveled to Grafenwoehr to teach the Level III course, a first in Europe, which began March 2.

"Hand-to-hand combat has always been in the United States Army," said Instructor Spc. Jorge Giovannina. "This is only an evolution of it - we're fighting a different war. Our program is based on actual scenarios, battles and cases that have happened downrange."

Giovannina explained that the course is effective because it prepares the Soldiers for what they will encounter when they deploy.

"We don't look at it as if it is going to happen. It has happened – how can we train it," he said.

The four-week, 160-hour course, focused on the skills needed to overcome the enemy in close quarters battle, a situation many of the students, said Instructor Sgt. First Class Tohonn Nicholson, USACS, will face.

Nicholson said he used his combatives skills on more than one occasion in combat.

"Sometimes in Iraq, the rooms are about the size of a closet. If you go in there with a gun, you can't shoot anyone. Soldiers are going to have to fight the distance between themselves

and the enemy," he said.

"I've used it numerous times when trying to detain someone. An enemy does not want to be taken into custody, so there are times you're going to have to fight back."

Although the training often leaves students bruised and exhausted, said Grafenwoehr's Sgt. First Class Curtis Mosley, 574th Quartermaster Supply Company rear detachment first sergeant and Level III student, it is an essential part of preparing to fight.

"You ask any first sergeant, 'who's your PT stud; who's your Hawkeye for weapons,' they can tell you that. Ask who your best fighter is, they can't tell you that.

"These are all important skills for downrange. ... Combatives is one of the Warrior Tasks and Battle Drills. It is essential we learn it," he said. "A lot of people don't like it because of the physical part of it, but it is definitely something that everybody needs."

The physical aspect of the program, the injuries, cuts and bruises that make medical personnel a requirement during bouts (when students fight each other to polish their skills) is often no more serious than injuries occurred during regular exercise and sports, said Staff Sgt. Kevin Rice, a Vicenza-based instructor who worked with the USACS instructors to train the students.

"(Recovery time) is longer for running when somebody injures their ankle on a run. With the downtime, it actually turns out that running is a

higher risk than conducting combatives training," he said.

Instructor Sgt. Stephen Wyatt, USACS, agreed. "We use every precaution we can ... it is the safest we can make it."

Regardless of the risk, Nicholson said, the training saves lives.

"With the enemy ... you can't just go out there and kill - you can't just go out and shoot a person. You will have to bring that person back, and they will have to be subdued.

"At the same time, if (a Soldier's) weapon fails, he's going to have to fight with the enemy for his life – and that's what he's fighting for, he's fighting for his life.

"Combatives is going to give him that edge to fight until (his buddy) can come in and help him. Even if he doesn't win the fight, he can fight until someone comes to assist him," Nicholson added.

The USACS asks students to remember that, "The winner of the hand-to-hand fight in combat will be the one whose buddy shows up with a gun."

Combatives, according to the school's Web site, must be kept in context - knowing that the U.S. is not going to win the next war because the Soldiers are better fighters, but that the program gives Soldiers the mental confidence and skills needed to live the Warrior Ethos.

The course, which was sponsored by the Joint Multinational Training Command, will conclude Friday.



Students in the Level III Combatives Course improved their technique by competing against each other during the four-week course.

U.S. Army Europe leaders call on Soldiers to get involved in preventing sexual assault

by Staff Sgt. AIMEE MILLHAM
USAREUR Public Affairs Office

U.S. Army Europe leaders are encouraging Soldiers to get more actively involved in preventing sexual abuse.

“Part of being Soldiers and leaders is having the personal courage to take action when your fellow Soldiers are in danger. If you see something wrong, intervene,” said Gen. Carter F. Ham, U.S. Army Europe commander.

Ham’s message falls in line with the Army’s “I.A.M. Strong” campaign launched in September, which shifts the focus of the sexual assault prevention program from reaction to prevention, and is designed to empower Soldiers to “Intervene, Act and Motivate,” said Rosalind Dennis, USAREUR sexual assault prevention and response coordinator.

The new strategy is designed to change the Army’s culture and encourage Soldiers to not “be bystanders” if they become aware of abusive situations, she added.

“This command must eliminate sexual assault, and we must do it together,” Ham said.

The Army News Service reported that in announcing the program at the Army’s 2008 Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers conference, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston also appealed to Soldiers to get involved.

“I need your help with an issue that is affecting our Soldiers -- sexual assault,” Preston said.

“We’ve been on the defensive concerning this crime - and it is a criminal act,” the sergeant major added. “The Army was focused on response.

Now, we’re going on the offensive. We’re implementing a new prevention campaign.”

The plan for USAREUR includes expanding prevention and intervention programs and introducing new programs to its Soldiers, Dennis explained.

Efforts began in December when USAREUR senior leaders received an overview presentation of training that is being developed for Soldiers to participate in this year as part of the new initiative.

In January, U.S. Army Garrison Kaiserslautern hosted more than 800 Soldiers for briefings on the new campaign.

Ham hosted a one-day training event for USAREUR senior leaders March 9 to hear from subject-matter experts in the field of sexual assault prevention and intervention, Dennis said.

In addition, the new programs are likely to be a major topic of discussion at USAREUR’s annual sexual assault prevention and response conference later this year.

Dennis said these are the beginnings of a robust training timeline her team will undertake this fiscal year based on a “community of responsibility” model that outlines the role of each community member in efforts to prevent sexual assault.

As part of the I.A.M. Strong initiative, the Army launched a dedicated sexual assault prevention Web site that provides an overview of the program and offers information, training and other resources for preventing and reporting sexual abuse and sexual harassment. The site can be found at www.sexualassault.army.mil.



Photo by Dave Melancon

U.S. Army Europe commander Gen. Carter Ham makes opening remarks at a daylong sexual assault prevention conference for senior leaders at the Patrick Henry Village Pavilion in Heidelberg, Germany, March 9.



UNDER PRESSURE

Eighth grade students at Netzaberg Middle School practice techniques to say no to and avoid dangerous and difficult situations involving drugs, alcohol, violence and shoplifting as part of the school’s Drug Abuse Resistance Education program.

D.A.R.E. is designed to teach the students good decision making skills as well as how to avoid high risk situations, and how to resist peer pressure.

The students will be graduate from the program March 30 at 1:30 p.m. in the Netzaberg Middle School Gym.

Courtesy photo

Community classes aid in suicide prevention

continued from Page 1

means removing any means (that could be used for self-injury) if the threat is to that level.

“It might mean helping the Soldier consider the available resources that can assist what is causing the distress,” he said.

The final step, “escort,” means taking the suicidal person to the health clinic or a behavior health professional.

Both Nielsen and Sorenson agree that prevention is best way to reduce suicide ideation.

“Don’t wait until the pain is extreme, but go in early to get help,” Nielsen summarized.

“Our community has some great resources, whether it be marriage or family counseling, attending classes on finance, parenting, stress reduction, or anger management – all can help us be more resilient so that when losses do come we are more likely to cope successfully,” he advised.

Guesthouse planned to open in 2011

continued from Page 1

of 72 hotel rooms spread out in seven different buildings will be replaced by a brand new three-story complex with 136 guest rooms.

There will be 72 standard units, 18 extended stay rooms and 46 extended stay family suites.

The new lobby is very spacious and the breakfast area much more generous than in the old Tower Inn.

In addition guests will be able to enjoy a comfortable fireplace, air conditioning, a conference room, a guest laundry room on each floor and an elevator.

The larger new facility also allows the Tower Inn Staff to provide 24-hour reception service as well as extended housekeeping and maintenance service.

The location of our new hotel gives visitors an opportunity to enjoy many additional features of our community.

The site is situated near the Bowling Center with Food & Beverage Service, the Food Court, the Tower Theater and the new PX and commissary complex.

“We will move to our new hotel with lots of joy”, said Andrea Mueller, who expects the project to be finished by the end of May 2011.

“Even though we have to leave the charm of the unique Tower Inn architecture of the early 1910’s behind, myself and my staff will do our best to take the spirit of hospitality with us to the new Tower Inn Hotel, Mueller promised.



Photo by Mary Markos

U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr officials break ground for the Grafenwoehr Guesthouse March 20. The hotel, which will feature 136 guestrooms, will be located next to the Bowling Center, Tower Theatre and PX.